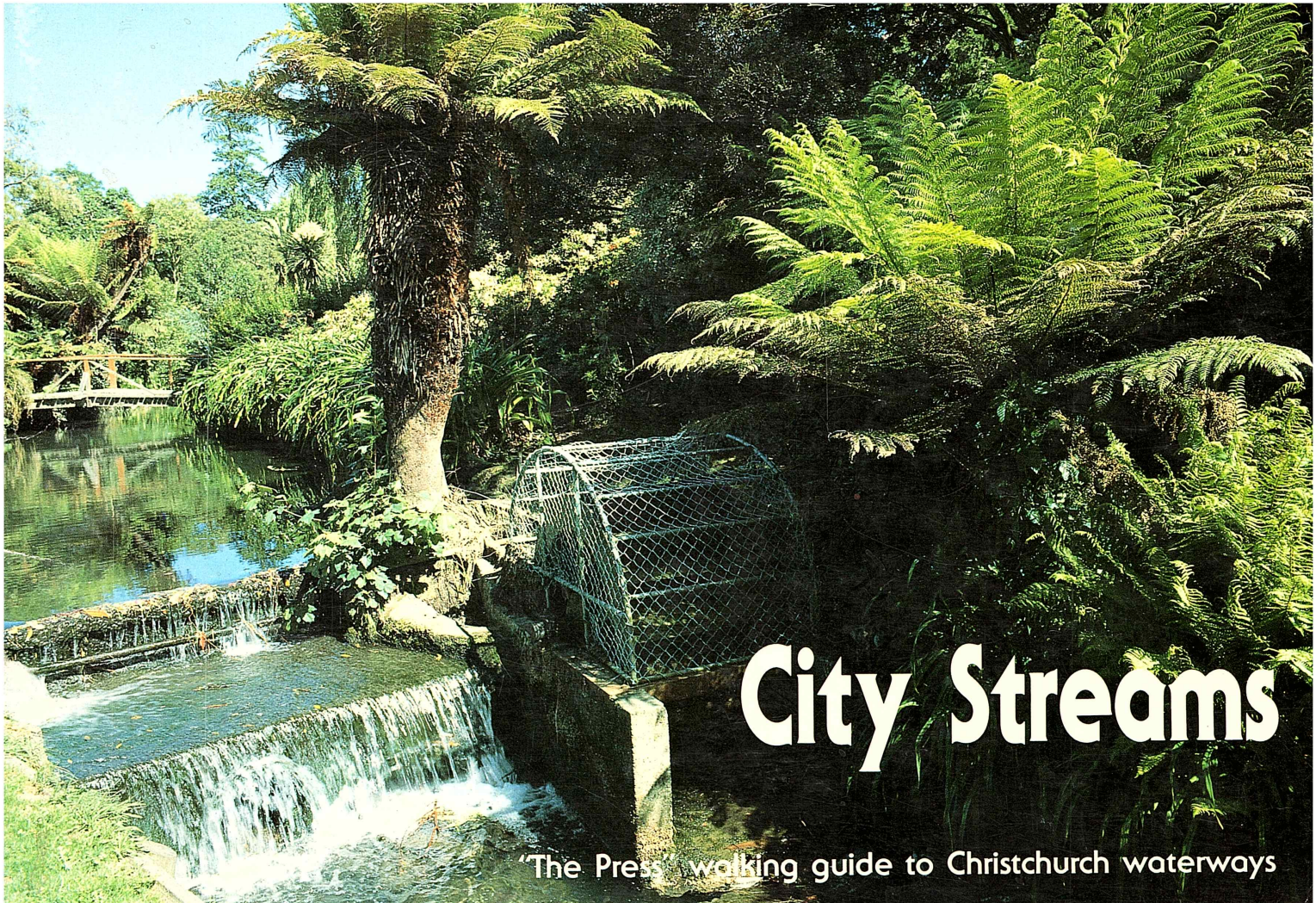

City Streams

"The Press" walking guide to Christchurch waterways

THE PRESS

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FRONT COVER: *Leaving the Ilam Homestead pond, the Avon River flows past a water wheel.* (Dean Kozanic)

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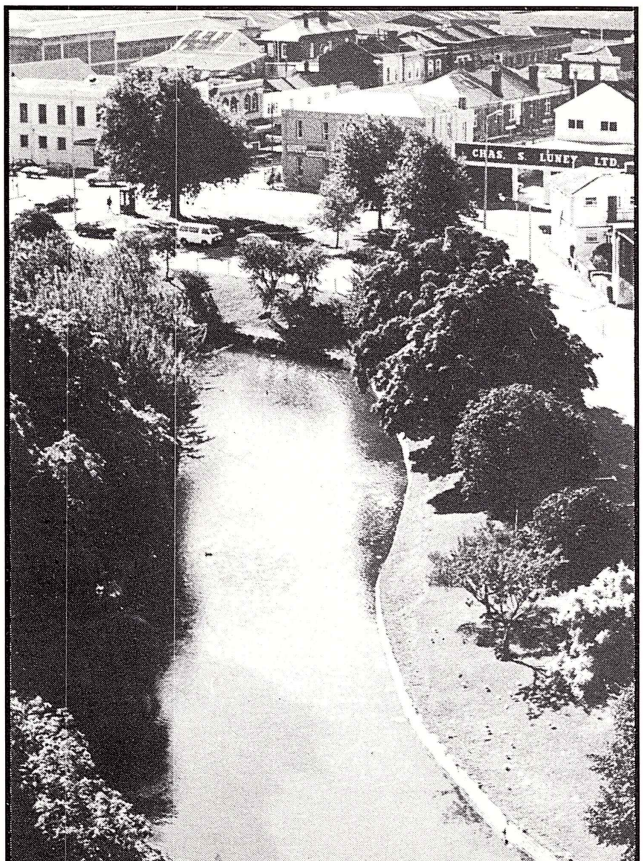


View of the Avon from the top of the Bank of New Zealand Officers' Provident Association building.

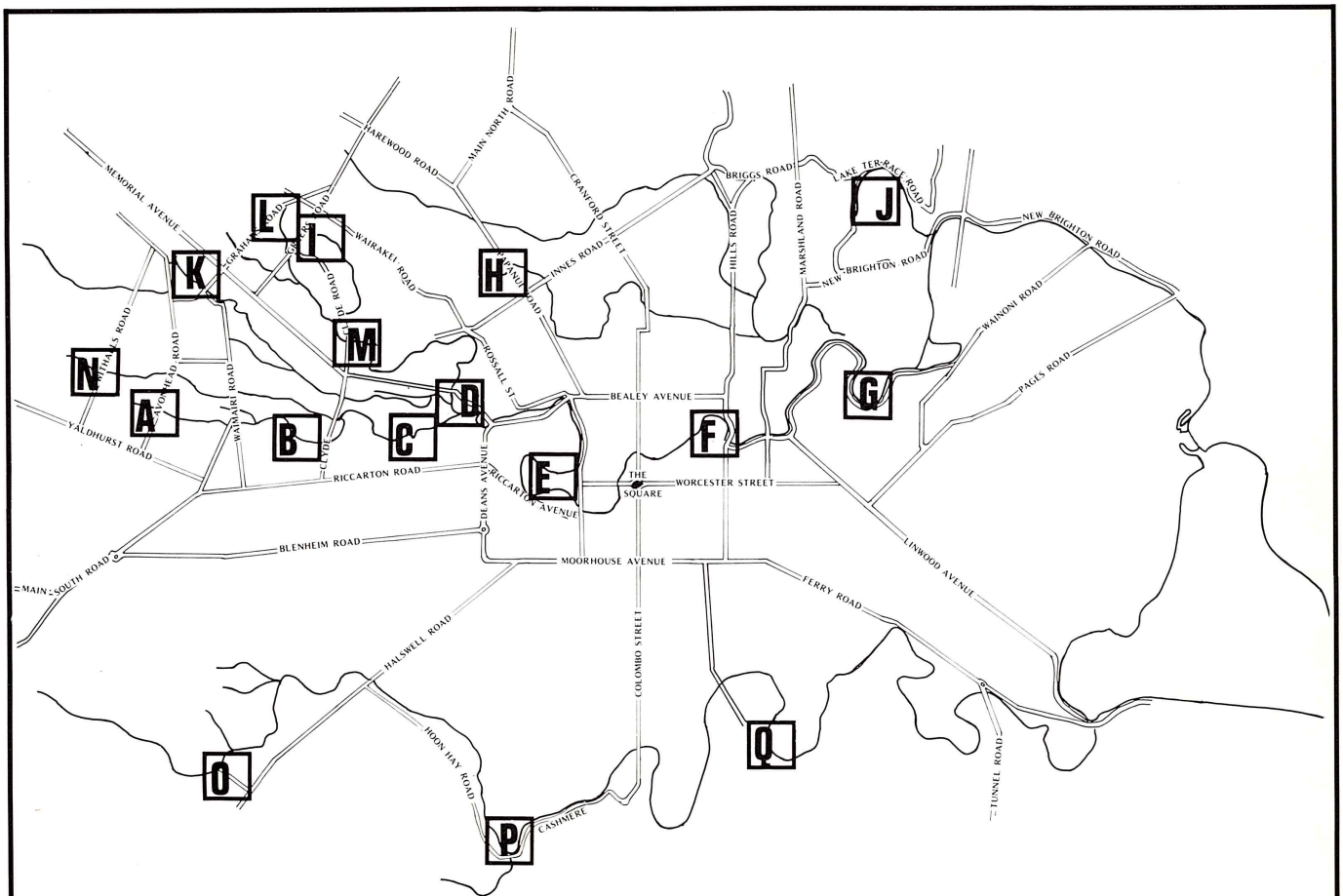
City Streams

by STAN DARLING

Photographs by
DEAN KOZANIC
and other members of
the photographic staff of

THE PRESS

"City Streams" was originally printed as a series of articles in "The Press"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BRIGGS ROAD
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WORCESTER STREET
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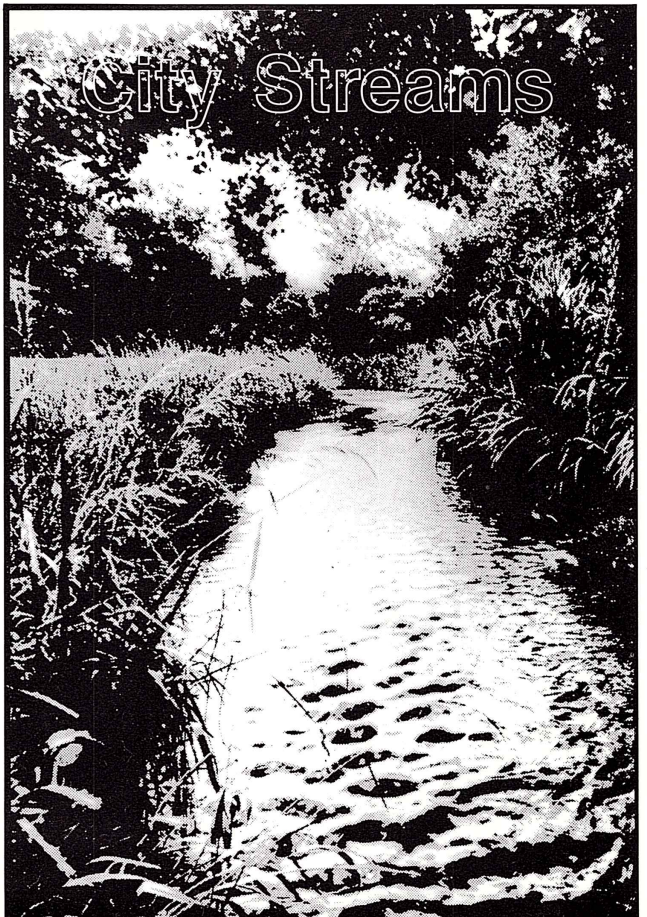


At the Worcester Street Bridge.

"The Press" guide to city streams

Many of us see the streams of Christchurch only fleetingly, as we cross them on bridges or pass them in cars.

But by accident or design—and most likely a bit of both—most of the streambanks are accessible to the casual wanderer. Other places along the streams that cannot be used by walkers and picnickers can at least be easily seen.

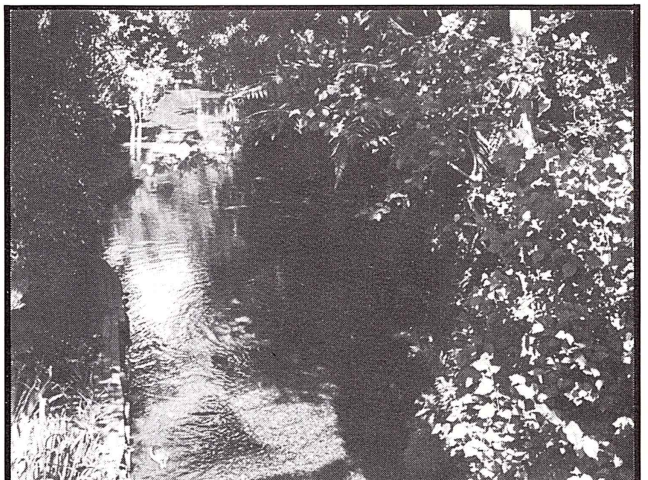
No other New Zealand city comes close to the variety of waterways that grace Christchurch.

The city's pioneers started a piecemeal landscaping of those streams that drained the flats. Over the years, the streambanks took on images of places the settlers had left behind.

Some of the city's grandest houses and estates were built along the streams. Some of those places remain hidden from view, but many—such as Ilam Homestead and Mona Vale—are open to the public.

Glimpses of other properties can be had from foot and traffic bridges.

Good-sized trout regularly push their way upstream in many of the creeks, even when they run shallow. The occasional eel comes into view,



Wai-iti Stream, a tributary of the Wairarapa, near Clyde Road.

and shags sometimes come inland to try their luck in rapid underwater swims.

Visitors and residents often restrict their wanderings to familiar stretches of the main rivers. If they want to look further, there is a lot more country open to them.

Each Christchurch neighbourhood has at least one waterway with special character, and all the streams can be reached by public transport.

"The Press" has followed the twists and turns taken by each stream, looking for places where people can at least get away from some of the city hubbub, if not from it all.

Avon springs to Ilam Homestead

Headwaters springs of the Avon River suffered a suburban fate some years ago. They were a nuisance to property owners, so they were piped.

Before that, it was possible to see where the city's main river started, east of Nortons Road, Avonhead.

Still, a walk along the upper reaches of the Avon can give you an idea, partly because of the well-planned parks, of how that part of Christchurch used to be.

The place where the Avon emerges as a lively little stream from its underground start is on private property, well back and hidden from the street.

Nortons Road goes into a long dip at the place where you can imagine a river starting. Nearby is Ferrier Park, with a line of tall poplars and fields linked with Avonhead School property.

Walk through Ferrier Park and along Balrudry Street. Keep an eye out for a bridge that marks the Avon's passage. Looking toward the city centre from there, you can see into the deep trough where the stream runs.

Now that houses have filled vacant lots in the neighbourhood, you cannot get down into that trough without permission.

Keep going down Balrudry Street and turn right into Stavely Street. Two blocks down is Avonhead Road. You can walk down to the Avonhead homestead property on your right and get a good view up the fledgling river from the bridge.

Cross Avonhead Road and walk along the right-side footpath in Parkstone Avenue, past a line of interesting houses with sections backing onto the Avon. Christchurch Teachers' College, with its maturing trees and sweeping grounds, is becoming more of an attraction in this part of the city. Its buildings no longer seem so stark with the softening lines of young trees set against them.

When you are just past Solway Avenue intersection with Parkstone Avenue, you can reach the river along a public way to your right. Down some steep steps is a concrete footbridge across the river. Because of the mature trees along here, the river trough is shady and cool.

You are now in the Corfe Reserve, and will see what imaginative landscaping can do for a neighbourhood. The reserve lies along the riverbank on either side of you, with new houses in front.

Turn left and walk along the reserve until you have come to Brodie Street and Athol Terrace. The Feltex carpet factory is just ahead.

Stay with the river by crossing the street and walking round the right side of a block building. That takes you along the heavily-treed river on

Ilam Stream, an Avon tributary, just before it meets the river in Ilam Homestead gardens.

University of Canterbury land that has not been developed.

You can reach the river from this high bank, but the gully is filled with heavy undergrowth. It is dark down there because of the thick trees.

Stay on the grass and follow the tree line. Soon, fences divide the grass from private gardens. At least one property has a sturdy footbridge linking its house and garden across the river.

You will come out in Peer Street. Cross the busy road and go along the Avon for a short way between Athol Terrace and Waimairi Road. This triangle of land, formed partly by closing one end of Athol Terrace to traffic, is a scenic delight. Much

of the land is private, but you can walk along its edge.

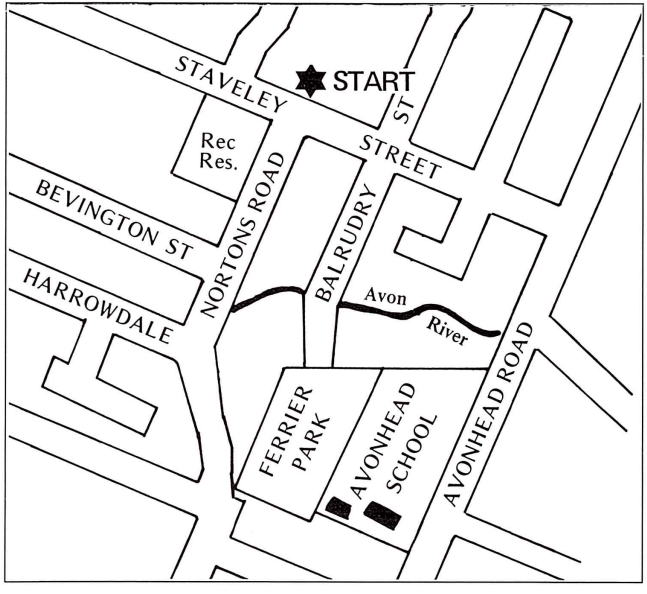
Across Waimairi Road, you can reach the Avon again by walking through a University of Canterbury student housing car park to a footpath leading into Ilam Homestead.

This part of the river, with its magnificent gardens, is hardly used by the public except when some of the flowering plants are in full bloom. Students pass through regularly.

The homestead is screened enough from the university and traffic that it is not hard to imagine it still being in the country.

These gardens on several different levels rival the Botanic Gardens far downstream, but they have a different character. The river can be crossed on four footbridges, with a lovely view back across the homestead grounds from the high terrace that runs into playing fields.

Backtrack along the terrace, through a woodland, and you will come to a footbridge back to the student housing block. That bridge is across Ilam Stream, a short tributary of the Avon that reaches a weir before it gets to the river. When there is enough water in the stream, a long pool is formed that reflects the surrounding bush.



HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take the Woodbury Street (Avonhead) bus to Nortons Road. Walk down Nortons Road to Ferrier Park. If you want to start on the Ilam Homestead end of this part of the river, take an Airport bus from the Square and get off at the university stop in Ilam Road, outside the Students' Union building. The homestead grounds are on your left.

To return to Cathedral Square, catch any bus in Ilam Road, outside the Student Union building.

The Avon on and off campus

After the Avon drops past the waterwheel at Ilam Homestead and goes the short distance to Ilam Road, it takes on a different look in a setting that has changed dramatically over the years.

The University of Canterbury's massive buildings tower over it, but their surroundings have been designed so that the feeling of a tiny waterway overpowered by bulk is missing.

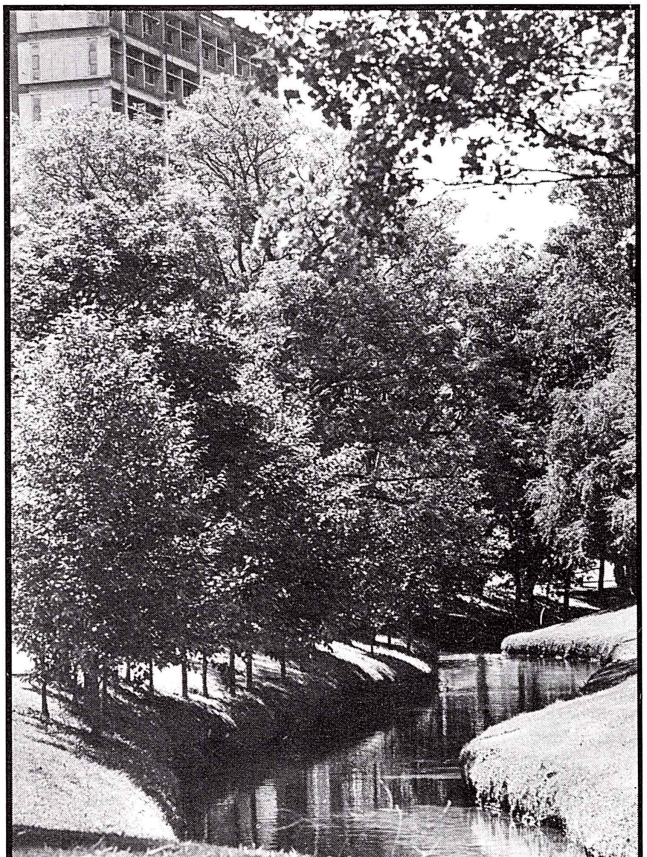
They fit well together. That may not have been so apparent when the buildings first went up and many of the trees were small, but it would be hard to fault the new university site's development now.

The streambed through here seems marbled, with long green weeds against a silt background in the current.

Starting in Ilam Road, walk along the University Drive footpath that follows the Avon downstream, across from the Students Union building. Lawns slope quickly toward the river, and there is a sharp drop to the water.

On your left, across the drive, the old Extension Studies building and handsome Registry tower stand near each other.

Three footbridges cross the river between Ilam Road and Clyde Road.



The Avon starts through the university campus, with the James Hight Library building towering over the trees.

At the first, which connects the Students Union with the rest of the campus, turn left and walk past the University Book Shop to the James Hight Library building. Go along the square in front of the library steps to see the interesting things that have been done with water.

A large pool under the steps ends in man-made waterfalls. You can walk above and below them.

Return to the river and down the footpath to the second footbridge. Cross it and go up the path to the left until it rounds a hedge boundary of the Ilam School grounds.

Leave the footpath and walk up the slope through a stand of young oak trees. At the crest, you will look down into the university's fine grassed athletic track, and out to the Port Hills.

From this vantage point, the university's looming buildings are half covered by nearby trees. You can continue along the river in two ways from here—either walking along the crest to the Recreation Centre, or going downhill to the stream channel and taking a well-worn dirt path under the trees. Down there, the other riverbank is high above you.

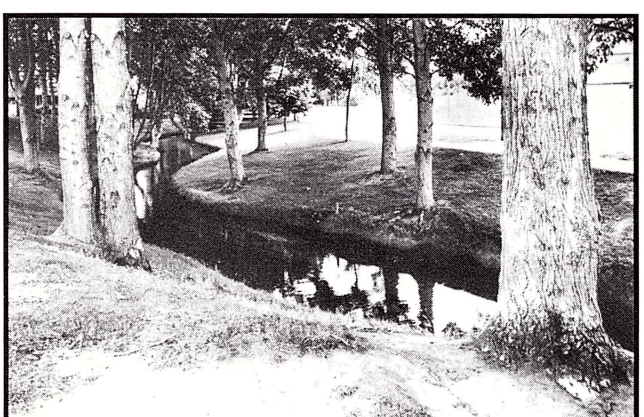
Either way will bring you to the third footbridge. From there, the left bank of the river is open for wandering to Clyde Road. You pass beneath mature trees with others across the drive. There is no footpath until you approach Clyde Road.

From this end of campus, it is worth spending some more time by doubling back on different routes. One choice is along the University Drive footpath. The river is on your left again, this time further below than on the opposite walking track.

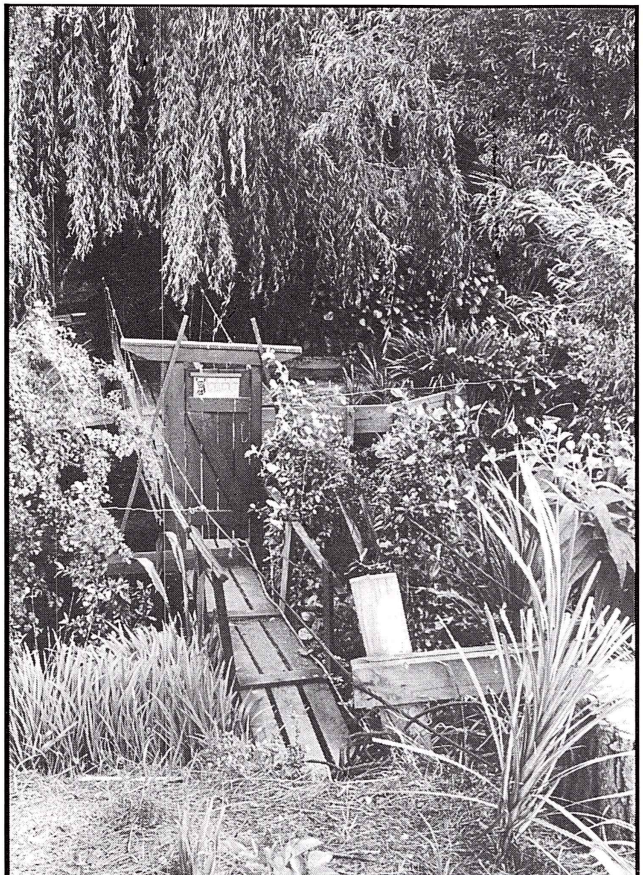
Another way back is up Fine Arts Lane, then along the tops of the grassed mounds. There is some up and down walking, and a section of car parks, then you are up on a line of mounds with a ridge. Follow the ridge and look down into the grounds and walkways around the university buildings.

That curving ridgeline brings you to a footpath opposite the second footbridge.

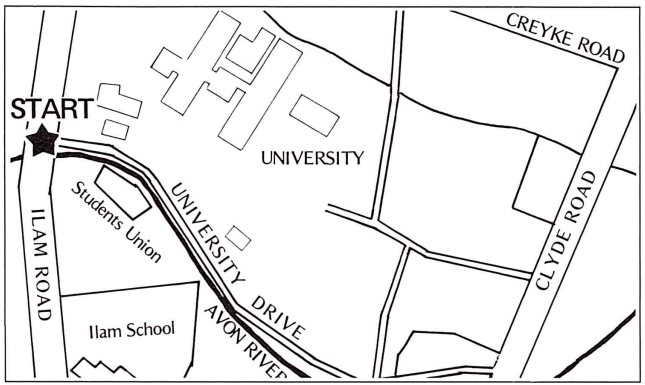
Because the Avon River goes into hiding for a while past Clyde Road—it flows past private property—it is probably best to restrict yourself to the campus and the nearby Ilam Homestead if you are out for a short stroll.



The young Avon winds near the Students Union.



A private Avon River footbridge near the university campus.



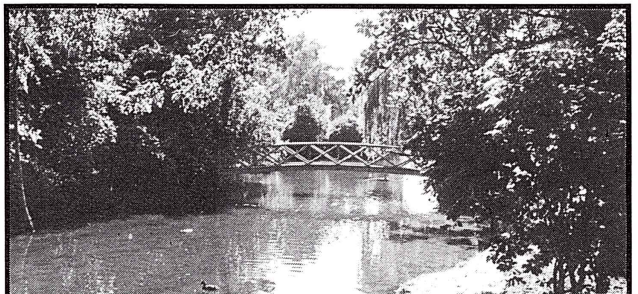
HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take an airport bus and get off at the university stop. If you want to start at the other end, get off the bus at the last Clyde Road stop before Kirkwood Avenue and walk north to the river and University Drive. You can also leave the bus in Kirkwood Avenue near a public way to Ilam School which meets the footpath by the athletics track.

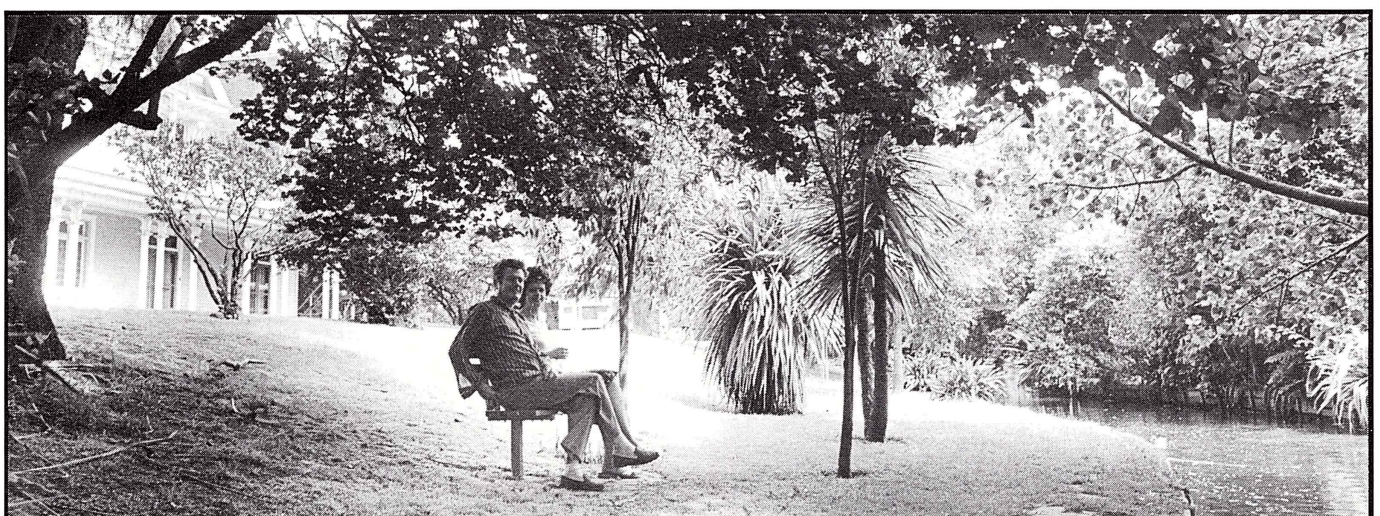
Woodbury Street (Avonhead) buses travel down Creyke Road, along the university's northern boundary. You can get off along there and walk down Engineering Road to Science Road, then across the lawn and through a stand of pines to University Drive and the river.

To return to Cathedral Square, catch a bus either outside the Students' Union building in Ilam Road or a bus going towards the city in Creyke Road.

A pioneer house, native bush, and a high school



Disused footbridge at Mona Vale.



The Avon curves past the front of Riccarton House, the old Deans homestead.

If you want to walk from the Clyde Road edge of the University of Canterbury campus to Riccarton Bush, you have the choice of a couple of routes. On one, you will see little of the Avon River, you will see none of it on the other.

Both walks are a good warm-up to a relatively short stretch of river open to the public, but a stretch packed with things to do.

If you walk up Clyde Road to the roundabout at Kotare Street, you can reach the Avon again by going along Kotare Street towards the city and turning right into Puriri Street. The next river bridge is just ahead, the Avon making its first public appearance since curving through a long residential block past the campus.

Turn left from Puriri into Totara Street and then left into Kahu Road. Another Avon bridge is just ahead, with sturdy brick sides.

Backtrack to Totara Street and remain on the left footpath round to Ngahere Street. You will have already seen the tops of Riccarton Bush behind the houses ahead. The entrance to the grounds is just down the short Ngahere Street.

The more direct route from the university is left from Clyde Road into Hinau Street, following the cycleway signs into Miro, Totara, and Ngahere Streets.

Riccarton Bush is worth an extended visit because of the homestead grounds and nearby walks through native swamp forest.

To avoid the steady stream of cyclists on the sealed path from Ngahere Street during busy times, turn either left or right as you enter the homestead grounds. Down to the left is the Avon River again. You can walk along a grassed bank to a place beyond the Deans homestead house, and benches with backs are provided.

If you turn right inside the grounds, you walk under trees and past picnic tables to the back of the replica pioneers' cottage. A younger section of the bush is to your right, behind a boundary fence.

The cottage is open for most of the time, and one entrance to the bush is just behind it. A loop track takes you to most parts of the bush, with many of the taller trees further into the interior.

Other tracks cross the bush from parts of the loop. One brings you out to Kauri Street on a route used by many locals on their way to shop in Riccarton.

Further on past the track entrance, behind the big house, is a lovely place for children to play. You can circle round the house through the stand of old homestead trees and back to the river.

Tour buses dash in and out of Riccarton House, but many people with more time spend a couple of hours in the neighbourhood.

When you are ready to move on, walk down the homestead drive to Kahu Road and turn left. Stay on the left footpath up to the second Kahu Road bridge, on a slight rise in the street.

There is a lovely view back up the Avon toward the homestead. Be careful crossing the road because of the amount of traffic and a curve nearby. On the other side of the bridge the view is darker because of thick tree foliage.

Here the river enters the Christchurch Boys' High School grounds. The school has no objection to responsible walkers along here, but cyclists are not welcomed. If you walk to the far side of the brick house in Kahu Road, you will find pedestrian access.

Follow the path round behind the school and you will come to a bridge. Under the bridge is a waterfall pounding off the top of a weir.

There is no exit across the bridge, so stay on the same side as the school and follow the path until you reach the corner of the main school buildings. The river veers right here.

Turn left along the school buildings and come out at the school's main entrance in Te Kura Street. Turn right in Straven Road for another look at the river from the nearby bridge.

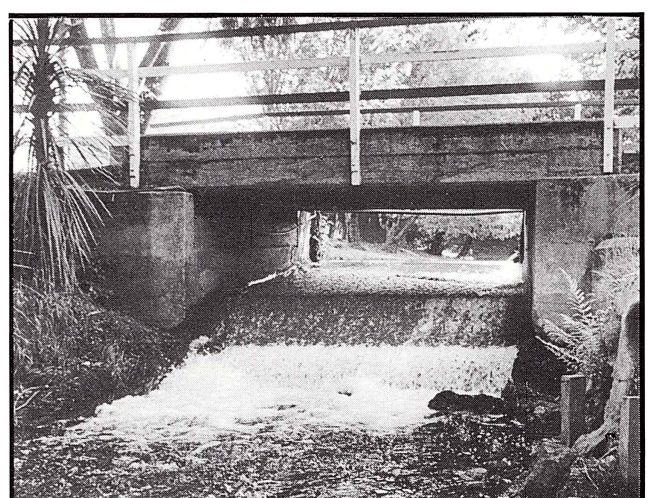
By staying on the left side of Straven Road and walking north, you can walk along a grass verge and look back at the famous view of the Boys' High School seen across its playing fields.

Cross Straven Road into Rochdale Street, which meets Harakeke Street after a block. There is one more view of the Avon before the railway tracks to the right, at a river bridge. Upstream are the nicely landscaped grounds of private property, and downstream are new town houses built near the river.

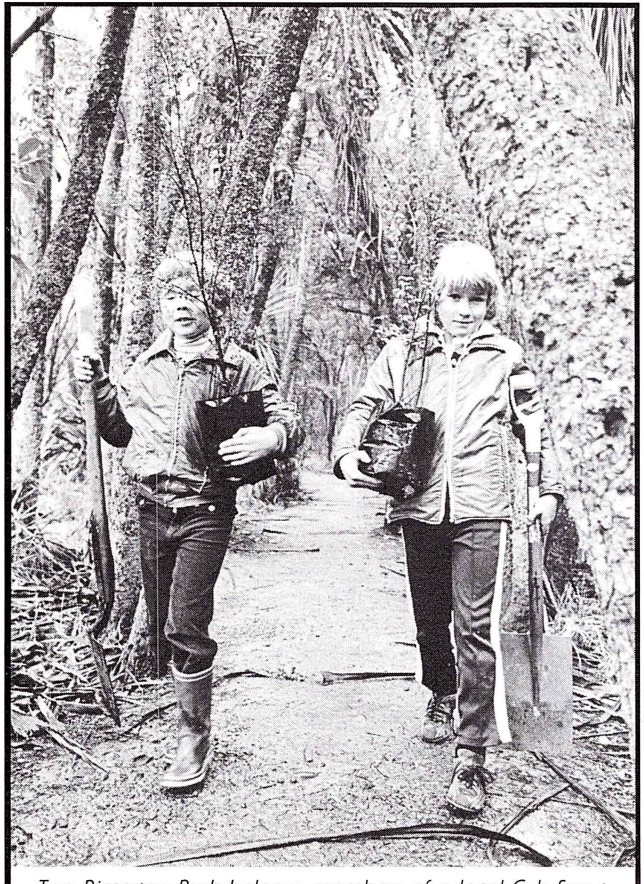
Walk back up Harakeke Street and turn right into Daresbury Lane. At the end of this lane is a gateway to the railway line.

You can walk through and to your right, across an outrider footbridge on a railway bridge over the river, and on down across the tracks to the back entrance to Mona Vale. The Mona Vale grounds can be seen from the railway bridge.

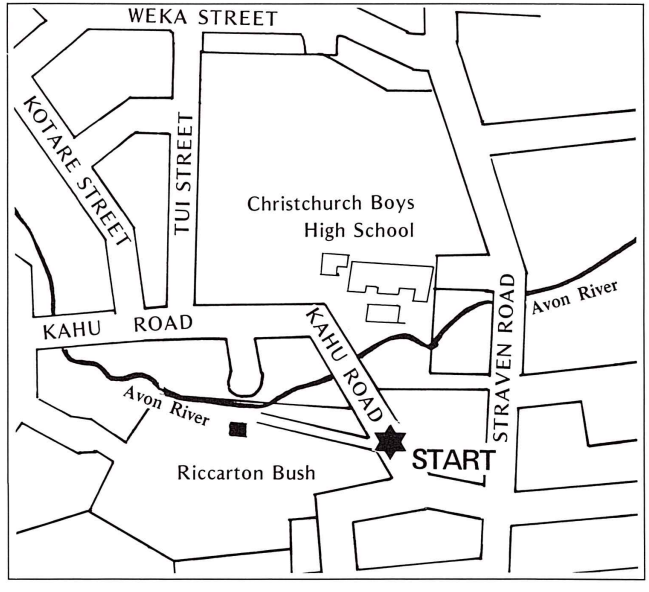
Inside the back entrance to Mona Vale, turn right down a shady drive to reach the lagoon.



The Avon falls over the weir at Christchurch Boys' High School



Two Riccarton Bush helpers, members of a local Cub Scout pack, with native trees for the forest.



HOW TO GET THERE

Take a Woodbury Street bus to the stop near Riccarton House if you want to start this walk from the middle and cut out its approaches. For a longer walk, get off the bus at the stop just past Puriri Street. An even longer walk can be done by taking an Airport bus and getting off in Clyde Road, just south of the university campus.

To return to Cathedral Square, catch a bus going towards the city in Fendalton Road, opposite the Mona Vale gatehouse.

Mona Vale to the city

The familiar homestead house at Mona Vale, now a centre of community life.

Mona Vale estate has the interesting coming together of three of the city's streams—the Avon, The Waimairi, and the Wairarapa.

Many other places where streams join in Christchurch are on private property.

A walk from the railway tracks at Mona Vale to the Armagh Street Bridge in the city is a long one, but it can be done in stages, and bus access to all of them is good.

Start from the Mona Vale gatehouse in Fendalton Road. The waterway beside you is Wairarapa Stream, which is wide here.

The long entrance drive to Mona Vale is probably the prettiest in the city. It is flanked on one side by houses whose grounds have been landscaped with the river in mind, and on the other side by screened railway tracks.

Coming in under the first white-painted bridge is Waimairi Stream, which starts further out in the country than the Avon.

There is no need to rush through here. On a dry day the gentle bank is a good place to sit and just watch the passing parade. Part of that parade, the ducks, may pester to be fed if you stop and seem a soft touch.

The Avon comes in under the second bridge. From here, you get a good view downstream along the Mona Vale Lake. The footbridge you see is picturesque but not very useful. It is unsound and closed to the public.

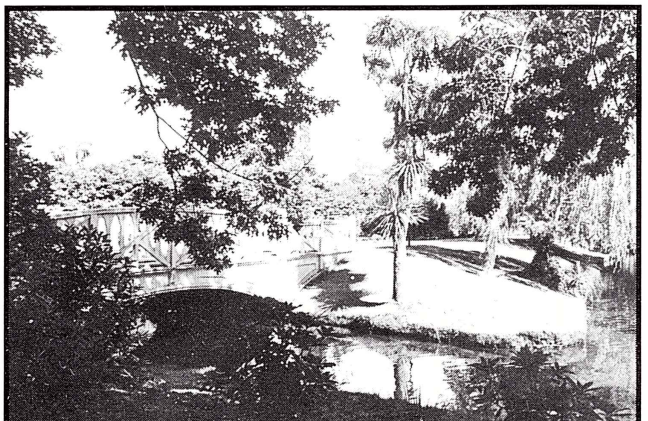
Do a circuit of the Mona Vale grounds while you are there. There is no established path because people just wander all over the place. The grounds have many vantage points for photos or for just looking.

If you follow the lake bank, you will come to a footbridge that can be used, arching high in the air. Across that is a lawn that leads to a side view of the weir and waterfall that mark the start of the adult Avon.

Walk back along the line of trees to a bridge over the end of a lagoon. That lagoon is now a re-opened water race, allowing some of the river's water to flow over a new weir. Past here is the new Christchurch Girls' High School. You can start to see the way that school will use its riverbank area that has been unused and overgrown for a long time.

From the vehicle bridge, walk down the lane to see the rose garden and lily pond. Other parts of the gardens have pathways in them.

There are two ways to get to the next part of the Avon. One is to leave by Mona Vale's Irvine Street entrance and walk to Matai Street, turning left to Deans Avenue, then left again past the new



The Avon enters the Mona Vale lake at left, joining the combined Waimairi and Wairarapa streams.

high school to Fendalton Road. You will be walking beside the river at the end of that route.

The other way is to retrace your steps down the entrance drive to Fendalton Road. The scenery is just as worth while going back.

At Fendalton Road, turn right and follow the footpath down to Hagley Park. Along the way, you will come upon the river again as it flows down from the Mona Vale weir. You can get a much-photographed view of the Mona Vale house from the footpath or the bridge just past the weir.

You can leave the footpath and walk on grass a while as the river makes a gentle curve past pine trees.

As you near Hagley Park, cross Fendalton Road, using the grassed part of an island as a pedestrian refuge. The left-hand footpath in Fendalton Road takes you across the Avon, then merges with a sealed path that starts along the river in Little Hagley Park.

A clear view can be had of houses and gardens on the other bank from this high vantage point. You will be sharing this path with cyclists and joggers.

At Helmores Lane, a bridge crosses the Avon to your left. Cross it on the right-hand side to find an entrance to Millbrook Reserve. You will often find you are the only visitor to this superb little park, and you can find a place to sit here.

You can continue on to leave the reserve by the other side and take your chances against the oncoming traffic in Carlton Mill Road, or you can go back to Helmores Lane, cross the bridge and rejoin the sealed pathway.

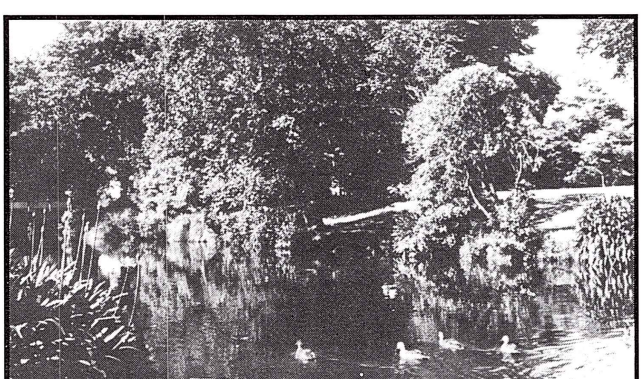
Before long, you will be at the end of the seal where a Hagley Park cycleway joins a footbridge to Carlton Mill Road. Here, you have two choices. Either continue along the riverside path or cross the bridge and walk on grass along the other bank.

This is the least-used way even though the scenery from the Little Hagley Park side is just as good. On the grassed bank, there are no bicycles and no joggers. It is much lower than the other bank, giving you a chance to get that much closer

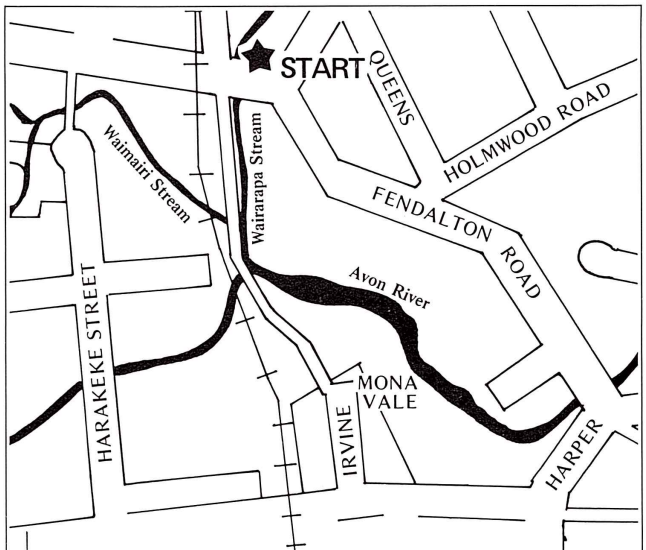
to the river. The riverbank reserve ends at a Carlton Mill Road footpath, and it is a short distance to the busy intersection at the Harper Avenue bridge.

From here to the Armagh Street bridge, the less used path is the walking track on the right side of the river. Either way is fine, and the chipped footpath on the left side offers some sweeping views as you approach the city centre.

More joggers use that side, and the walking track gives you more of a feeling of wandering in a park distanced from the city. On your right are stations in the North Hagley Park fitness track. If you want to get away from things even more, walk up the slope and along the grassed crest. The playing fields and rest of the park are easier to see from here.



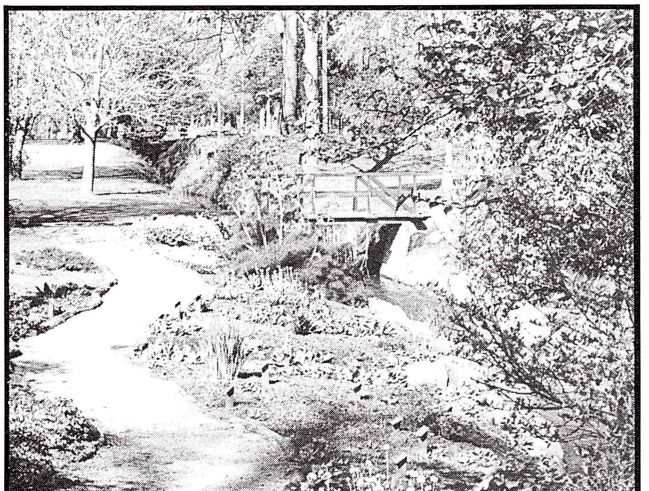
The old mill race lagoon at Mona Vale.



HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take a Merrin Street or Burnside Crescent bus to the Fendalton Road stop just before the railway tracks and Mona Vale gatehouse. To do shorter sections of the walk, leave the bus at the stop before the Carlton Mill Road footbridge, or the next stop around the corner to get closer to Millbrook Reserve.

You can also walk from Cathedral Square to the Armagh Street gates to Hagley Park. From there you can do a loop walk to Millbrook Reserve, up one side of the river and back the other.



Primula garden near the Avon River, in the Botanic Gardens near the woodlands band rotunda.

Settlers' spring to Early Wharf

The Armagh Street gates to North Hagley Park can be the start of a long walk where the Avon River does its slow meander of the city centre.

There is probably too much to do at one time along this part of the river, mainly because of all the side attractions.

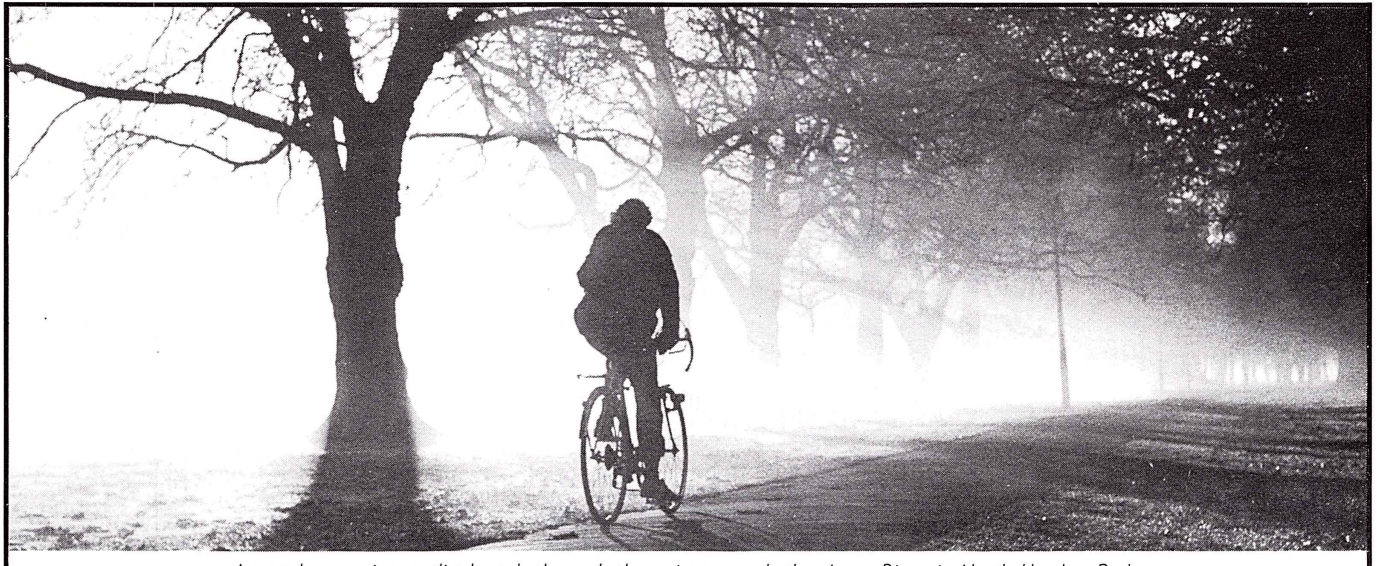
The walk can be shortened at any place past the Botanic Gardens by doing a shortcut down streets such as Cashel and Hereford, bypassing loops in the river. But using the river route takes only a few minutes longer.

From the Armagh Street bridge, stick to the riverside path across from Christ's College, with its building mixture of old and new and its attractive courtyard facing the stream.

You will soon come to the first bridge across to the Botanic Gardens. A lovely way round the edge of the Gardens is along the perimeter path that starts on the other side of this arching footbridge.

If you stay on the park side of the river and keep to the now-sealed path, you will cross the outlet from Victoria Lake, on your right. Just beyond here is a path, sometimes overgrown, down to the river.

Go down there, through a bicycle barrier, and continue to the bottom, where you will find a paving stone platform and bench. Some years ago, this structure was built to enclose the spring that early settlers living at the top of the riverbank slope in Hagley Park used for water.



An early morning cyclist heads through the mist towards the Avon River in North Hagley Park.

The spring, right at the water's edge, does not always flow very well, but the structure is a fine place to sit and watch the river pass.

Tracks approach the spring from two sides, so you can climb out of the river through to a walkway along the top of the slope.

Just along the way is the flat-sawn stump of a big tree, another place to sit and look across to the Gardens. Picnickers have been using the stump as a table.

At the next Gardens bridge, either cross to the path on the other side or stay on the car park side and choose your own way through the pine trees.

If you go into the Gardens, watch for a path to your left that goes around both sides of an arm of a larger pond. Take the interesting trail that leads round the pond, with benches along the way and a beautiful stone bridge built a few years ago. Come out again to the river and continue on round to the next bridge.

On the other side, you will see the track that leads from a bridged drain. That track splits into three, two of them near the river.

From the next footbridge take the path on the right-hand side of the river through the woodlands, a quiet place to walk whether or not the daffodils are out.

A few steps off the riverside track is a cairn drinking fountain which steadily pumps out cold water, which flows into a stream-like drain and enters the river. The fountain marks the site of the area's first trout hatchery.

After a round of the woodlands and a nice little garden on the banks of the drain, return to the footbridge and continue the walk along the Gardens perimeter.

You will come out in Rolleston Avenue beside the Garden's curator's residence. Walk past the hospital bridge to the Antigua Boatsheds foot and cycle bridge. If you cross that bridge and head towards the business district, you will be higher above the river than on the boatsheds side, but you will be walking along a sealed footpath.

A thin track has been worn through the grass on the steep riverbank. It comes out at the Montreal Street bridge and is not suitable for most walkers unless they have good balance and a sense of humour about going for an unexpected dip in the river.

Stay on the boatsheds side of the river for a more relaxed stroll, crossing Montreal Street and choosing one of the unsealed pathways towards Cashel Street. The long Rhododendron Island, now containing a wide variety of trees and shrubs, is worth more than a passing glance.

On the other side of the river, a newly-sealed pathway crosses in front of the new Tiffanys Restaurant building. St. Michael's Church and Bell Turret can be seen beyond that building.

At Cashel Street, cross over to the Bridge of Remembrance and walk round on it even if you intend to stay on the left side of the river.

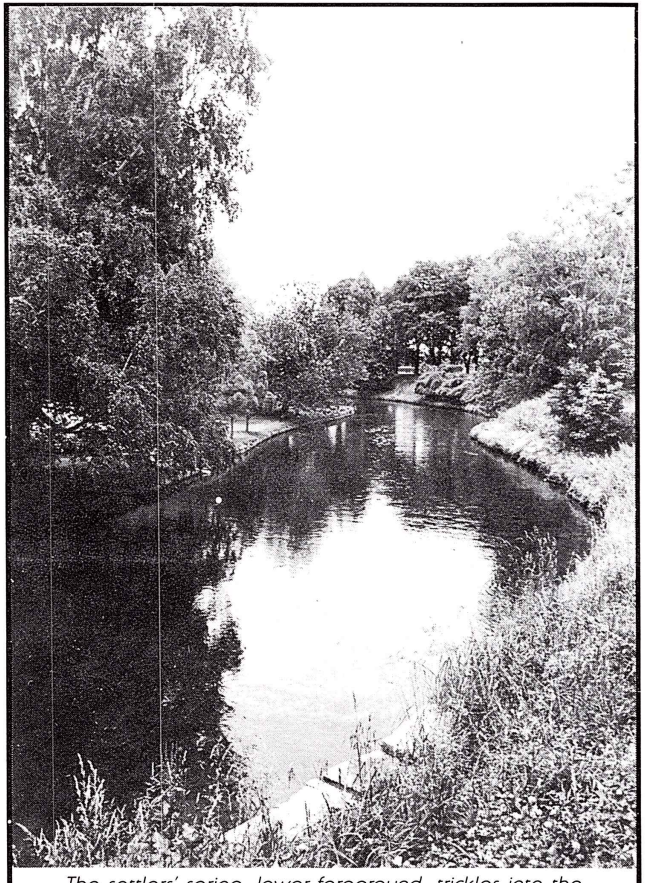
That side of the Avon has a tree-shaded pathway for two blocks, to Worcester Street. Water rats can occasionally be seen on the opposite riverbank, scrounging for crumbs from somebody's lunch.

On the Hereford Street bridge, pause to watch the river splitting around Mill Island, where an early flour mill once stood.

The opposite bank has good places to wander and sit, but stay on the left footpath past Worcester Street to get good views downstream to the new library. At Gloucester Street, cross to the walkway through the Provincial Buildings grounds and past the District Court offices.

Across Armagh Street, stay on the left-hand bank and take the scenic cobblestone walk downstream to the Town Hall.

Spend some time on the Town Hall grounds and at the Ferrier Fountain before crossing the Victoria



The settlers' spring, lower foreground, trickles into the Avon across from the Botanic Gardens.

Street bridge and walking opposite the Town Hall to Colombo Street.

Take the pathway that starts at the bottom of steps on the river side of the Oxford Victualling Company. That path leads round to the Oxford Terrace footpath again.

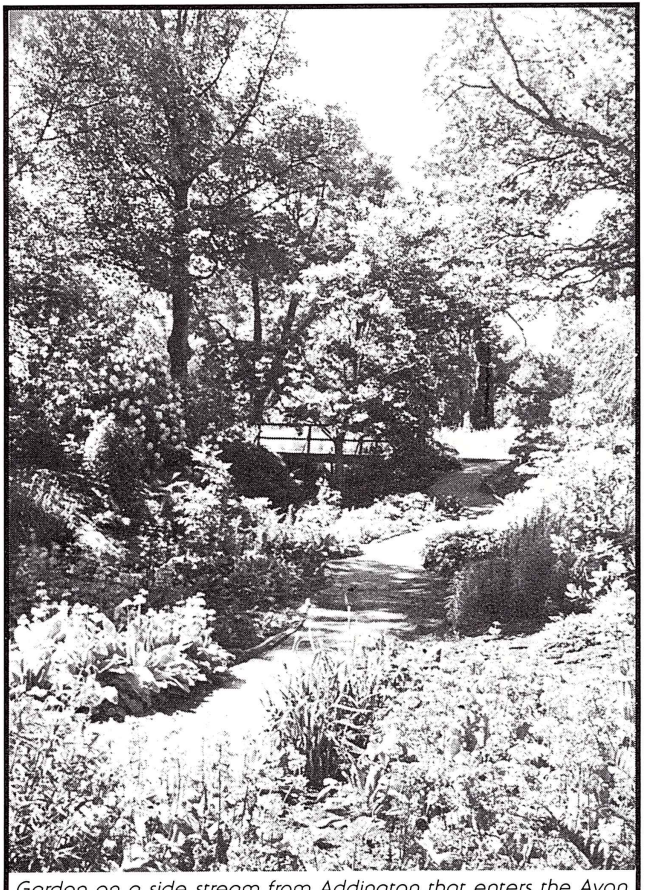
When you reach Manchester Street, cross the bridge and look downstream, through the much-photographed line of old poplars. Those trees cannot last forever and will have to be replaced a few at a time. The view is still one of the best on the river.

Walk down the Cambridge Terrace side of the poplars along a wide path. Or if you want to sit and watch the river, choose a place on the steeper, grassed bank on the other side.

At the Madras Street bridge, cross over to the far side of the intersection with Kilmore Street and take a sealed path on the left-hand side of the river.

That path leads to a cul-de-sac section of Cambridge Terrace. Follow the riverbank and keep an eye out for a stump sticking into the river channel. In 1979, a giant log was dredged from the riverbed. It had fallen across the river before white settlers arrived, and had become a nuisance because it was causing water to erode the riverbank. Silt and debris had built up behind it.

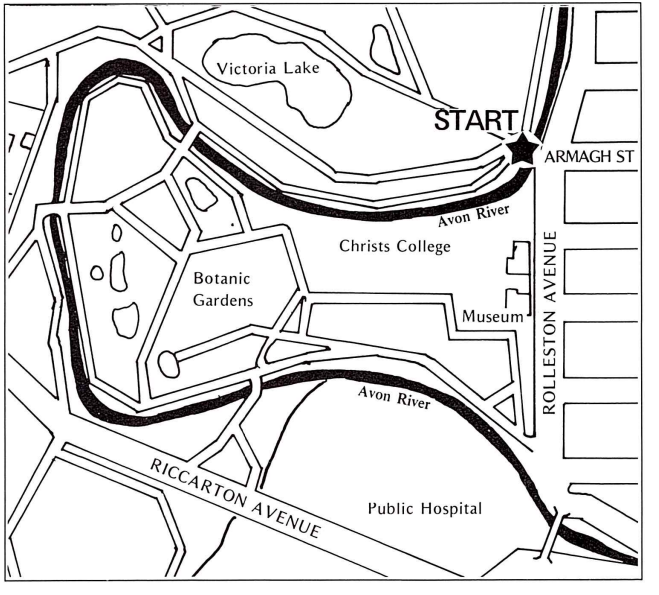
At Barbadoes Street, cross the bridge on the upstream side and backtrack a short distance to a cairn that marks the spot where the old Bricks



Garden on a side stream from Addington that enters the Avon in the Botanic Gardens woodlands.

Wharf stood in the 1800s. Settlers landed by boat at that wharf as early as 1843.

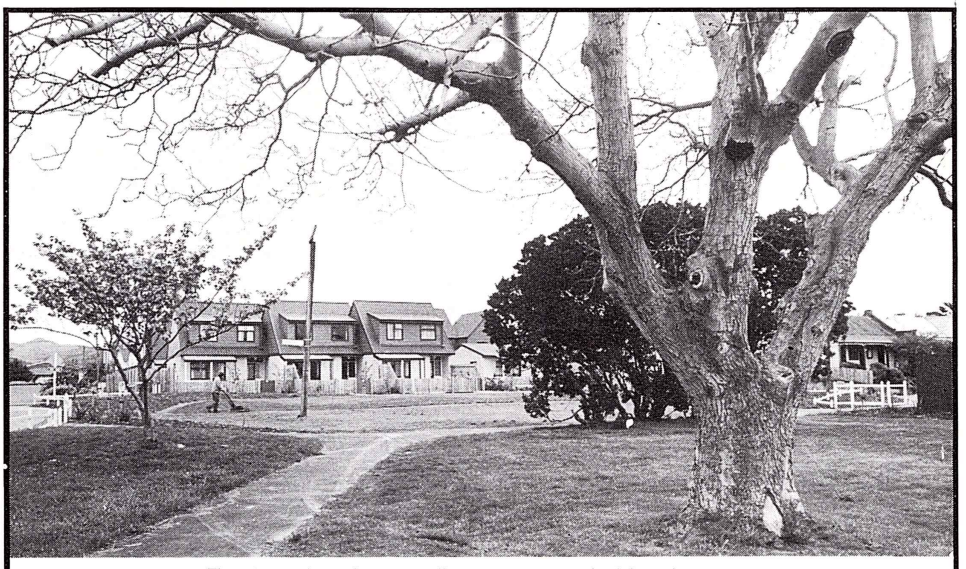
To get more information on the city centre section of this part of the river, get a Riverside Walk brochure published by the City Council's walks committee.



HOW TO GET THERE

Walk from the city centre up Armagh Street to North Hagley Park and follow the pathway to the left, just inside the gates.

From the Loop to Dallington



The Avon Loop's new village green and old walnut tree.

Tidal influences on the Avon River is obvious as it flows under the Barbadoes Street bridge, after the Bricks Wharf site is passed.

Sometimes the river flows quickly over rocks as it rounds the Avon Loop curve, and sometimes the riverbed is buried deep.

You can follow two routes from the bridge. One goes through the Avon Loop neighbourhood, and the other skirts it on a high path above the river.

An interesting short walk can be done by following one to the Fitzgerald Avenue bridges and coming back on the other.

Take some time to wander through the loop neighbourhood if you get a chance. For many years the residents there have been active—and successful—in promoting changes that have both altered and preserved their surroundings.

Leave the river at Hurley Street and walk down to the village green, a pedestrian and playground

area formed at a previous traffic intersection with Bangor Street.

Walk left in Bangor Street to get an idea of how a street can be landscaped to discourage through traffic. Bangor Street ends at Oxford Terrace and the river. Wander back upstream, along the side, grassed riverbank. Along here, the River Carnival is held on the last Saturday in January.

Carnival activities re-create what used to happen when rowing clubs had festivities further downstream, near Fitzgerald Avenue traffic bridges. There was only a footbridge in those days.

Following the river's left edge from Barbadoes Street, you will find an informal path along the bank leading off the sealed footpath downstream from the Salisbury Street intersection with Cambridge Terrace.

The dirt path is a well-worn shortcut that takes you closer to the river as it starts its curve around Avon Loop.

You will come to the sealed footpath again, and the historic old pioneer cemetery will be still on your left. It is worth crossing the road to have a look round there.

The footpath now is high above the river, with some lovely views across to the old neighbourhood and the Port Hills beyond, and down to the river through the branches of old willows.

When you reach Fitzgerald Avenue, turn down to the right along the sealed pathway below the street's retaining wall. Vegetation that was planted a few years ago along there has taken hold quickly. On the wall is a mural painted four years ago, showing dogs cavorting with a ball. The mural has been repainted to heighten its colours.

Where the by-pass footway ends, cross Fitzgerald Avenue's two lanes and enter River Road. Either use the footpath here or pick your way along the riverbank.

A footpath walk might be better. There is not much traffic but when the cars come round the curves they can keep you on the hop. There is plenty of scope to walk nearer the river later.

Stop at a place where you can see the white-sided Stanmore Road bridge and watch the sunny day reflections of buses and cars in the water as they cross the river.

You might want to cross the bridge for a walk in Beverley Park, then cross the road and take a few steps down Avonside Drive to find the drive up to the Holy Trinity Church. After that side trip, come back to the bridge and cross it to turn right into River Road again.

Stay on the River Road footpath round to Swanns Road, then stick to the footpath again as you continue down River Road. There is no room on the other side of the road for easy walking.

You will come to Evelyn Couzins Avenue soon. The winding street has been closed to vehicles at this end, and the result is a quiet little sanctuary near the river. Turn into the street to find another

sanctuary, the sheltered Avebury Park with its swings and paddling pool. The park is hidden away from most road users.

After a rest there, go back to River Road and cross soon to the other side of the street when the grassed bank starts to spread out.

This is the start of Avonside's glory. The river is flanked by mature, shady trees. Walking on the grass gets easier, with less slope.

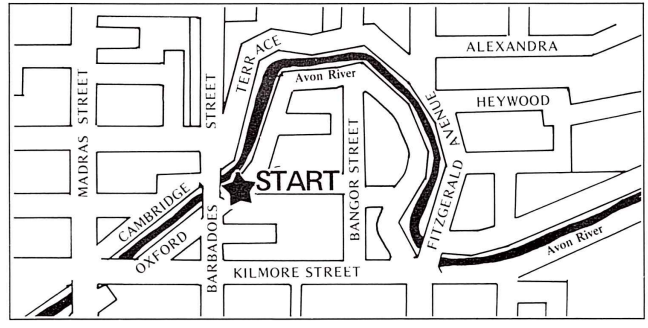
You will come to a footbridge opposite the meeting of Medway Street with River Road. From the bridge are sweeping views as the river bends into sight far upstream and curves away downstream.

Keep going across the bridge and walk downstream along the right bank. The bank is flatter and wider than before, with many old trees. Because there is so much green space and nearby traffic is light, there is a lot of scope here for picnicking and walking peacefully.

If you decide to stay on the River Road side of the footbridge, walk up to the river bend where Banks Avenue comes in on the left and McBratneys Road starts straight ahead.

You will cross a small bridge where Dudley Creek enters the Avon here. Turn right into Dallington Terrace and walk above the river, looking back for views across to Avonside on the other bank.

Both routes end at the Dallington Bridge, so a continuous walk can be done from the footbridge further upstream.



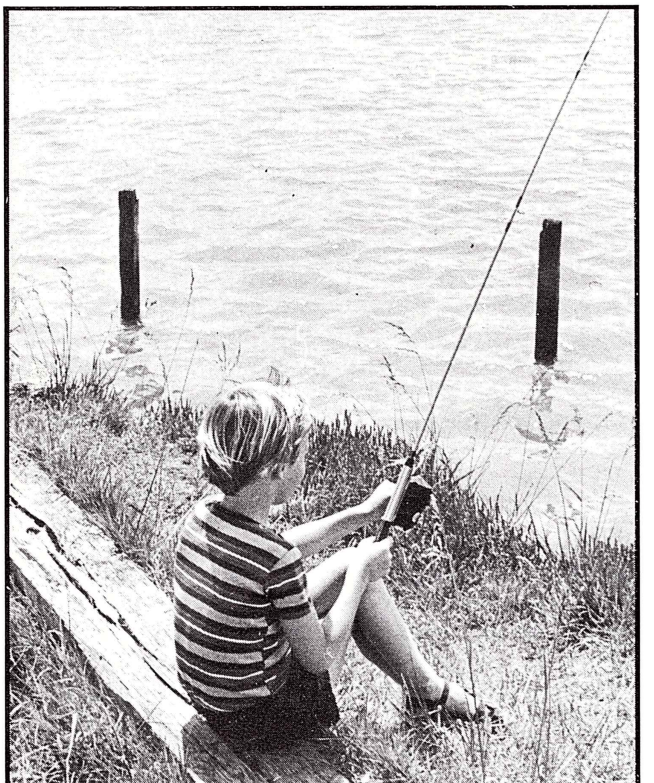
HOW TO GET THERE

The Avon Loop is a short walk from the city centre, along Oxford Terrace or Cambridge Terrace, but you can take a bus from Cathedral Square that will let you off in Fitzgerald Avenue, at the far end of the loop. If you want to cut out the early part of the walk and concentrate on the Avonside section, take either a Bampton Street 11F or Liggins Street 11D bus and get off in Retreat Road or Morris Street.

From those places you can walk a short distance to the river in either direction, coming out near the Swanns Road bridge, the Medway Avenue footbridge or the Dallington bridge. Any No. 10 bus for New Brighton or Marshland Road will take you up North Parade. You can get off in the Parade and walk east down Medway Avenue to the river and a footbridge.

To return to Cathedral Square, catch a bus heading toward the city in Gayhurst Road.

Avon Park to Estuary



A young fisherman beside an Avon filled by the high tide, near the Estuary.

From Dallington Bridge, the Avon River takes a wide sweep towards Kerrs Reach. Stay on the right side of the river, keeping on the footpath until there is room to walk on the riverbank.

The bank is good for walking along here, and you can go up on an arching footbridge to get a good view downstream, along the riverside trees in Avon Park.

Before reaching the footbridge, you can enter the park through an accessway off the Avonside Drive footpath. Take that route to look down across the park from its back path and out to Kerrs Reach.

Whether you do that or stick to the riverbank, cross the bridge into Porritt Park and go to your right for a walk in the grass as you follow the lazy loop of offshoot river bypassed by Kerrs Reach. At the far end of the loop is another footbridge into Avonside Drive again.

Now you begin a long walk downstream, often past dredging cranes. Benches are liberally placed along the bank.

On the other side of the river, you come abreast of a New Brighton Road bridge over three culverts. That is the Horseshoe Lake outlet, with the pumping station just behind.

After a long straight stretch with fine views back to the hills, the river bends towards the sea. Cross

the Avondale Bridge and walk along a partly-worn path beside New Brighton Road.

Just past a line of tall poplars and a small cottage is a way to the river, across a low, wooden vehicle barrier. This wide riverside reserve runs along the back fences of new houses, then comes out again to the road.

Much of the streambank along here, to the Bower Bridge has at least a faint path.

Past the bridge, still on the river side of the road, is a low bank with a more distinct path along its spine. The bank runs along the edge of the Cockayne Reserve, an area of swamp plants that has lost much of its natural water because of the efficiency of nearby residential stormwater systems.

The City Council is looking at ways to inject more water into the reserve. Because the vegetation is so fragile, stick to the path or well-marked tracks leading down to the river.

A worthwhile side trip from here is down Pratt Street, which runs north off New Brighton Road. Where Pratt Street meets Keyes Road, cross to the opposite footpath and walk north to a track entrance to your right into Rawhiti Domain. A track off to the left comes out at Grantley Street and Bowhill Road.

To the right of the domain track is an area of sandhills covered by pine trees. There are tracks through the sandhills.

You can return to the riverbank for the short walk to the bridge into New Brighton. A new stretch of riverside walkway has just been built between the Cockayne Reserve and the New Brighton Bridge. Cross the bridge and walk down Owles Terrace. Most of the way along here you can get well off the street by staying near the riverbank.

Keep to your right into Admirals Way, past the New Brighton Power Boat Club, and walk down to the Evans Avenue turnoff. Here you pass houses and a private boat dock.

In front of you is the northern entrance to the Estuary Walk, and the start of the Avon Marshlands. The walkway passes through pine trees. Recently, the landscape has changed because of Drainage Board riverbank protection stopbank construction. The marshes are best seen at high tide.

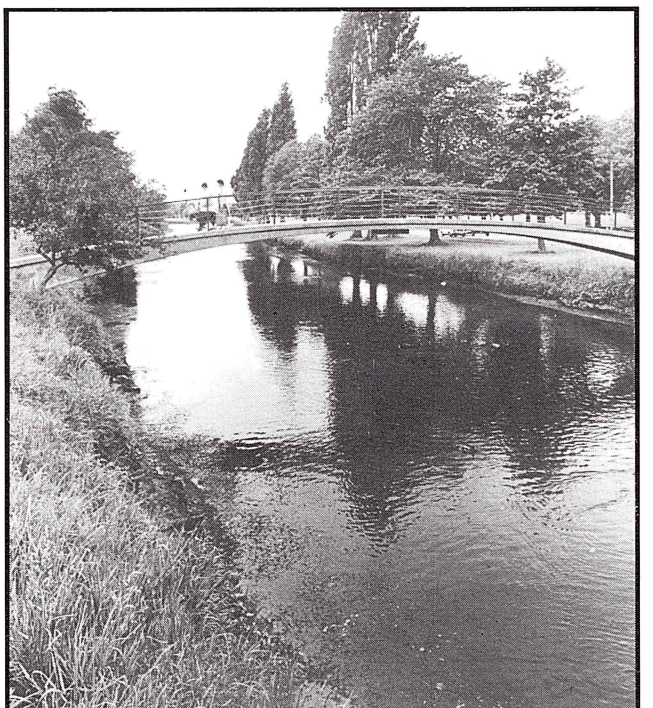
This part of the walk is rough now, but will soon settle down. It comes out in Kibblewhite Street. Follow the stopbank ridge beside the street to a point opposite the pine forest, then cross and walk into the forest. The path is indistinct through here, partly because of pine needles covering the forest floor.

You will come out of the trees at Bridge Street. Cross to find the wide, sandy track that carries on down to South New Brighton Park.

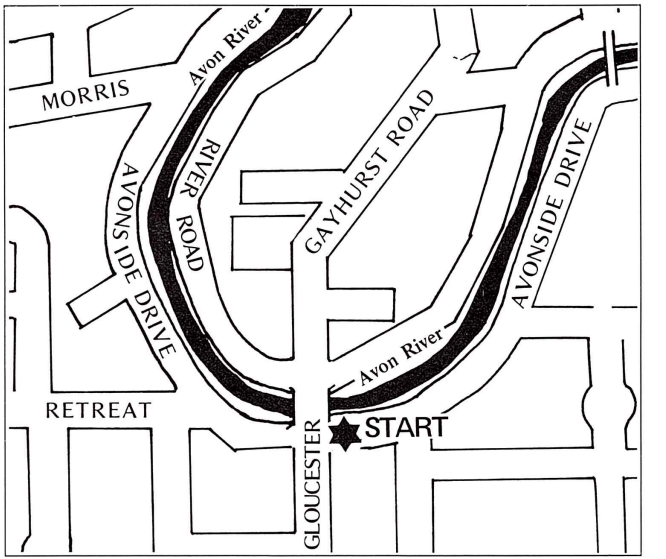
By this time, the river channel has entered the Estuary and can be seen only at low tide. Past the Pleasant Point jetty, stay near the Estuary shore. The track follows the shoreline, through and near thick

stands of pine that isolate you from the residential part of South New Brighton.

The river channel comes near the shoreline once more where the Estuary Walk breaks out into the open and ends at Estuary Road.



Arching footbridge over the river near Avon Park.



HOW TO GET THERE

To reach Dallington Bridge, take any Bampton Street or Liggins Street bus from Cathedral Square. A Parklands or New Brighton No. 29 bus will take you a bit further toward Avon Park, and you can get off in Torlesse Street. To reach Bower Bridge to start your walk there, those same buses can let you off at the start of the Cockayne Reserve. The most regular buses to the Seaview Road roundabout, are No. 5 buses to New Brighton and Southshore.

To return to Cathedral Square, catch a bus heading toward the city in Estuary Road.

St. Albans Creek:

Hard to find and hard to view

St. Andrew's College chapel looks down on the start of St. Albans Creek.

For much of its length, St. Albans Creek is a stream hard to take a shine to, mainly because it is hard to see unless you know where to look.

Still, it passes through some interesting neighbourhoods and one superb park, and a walk along its length ends in one of the prettiest tree-lined streets in Christchurch.

St. Albans Creek has a lovely beginning. It comes into view in an unusual place, on the grounds of St. Andrew's College. Its water forms a picturesque pond beside the school's chapel. You can get good views of the chapel and lily pond from Normans Road and Papanui Road without entering the school grounds.

On the other side of Papanui Road, at a bus stop, you can look over a fence to see where the stream starts. Walk down Papanui Road toward the city centre and turn left into Chapter Street. Although the stream is mainly hidden away behind fences and shrubbery where it crosses residential streets on its way south, the views of gracious houses and landscaped gardens are worth the back-and-forth forays down those streets.

After finding the Chapter Street crossing, return to Papanui Road and continue toward the Merivale shopping centre. Turn left into Weston Road. Where the stream appears on your left, ferns are growing so thickly on each bank that you can almost miss it. The footpath dips at this point.

St. Albans Creek footbridge in Abberley Park.

Beside one house across the street, a new channel has been dug so the creek will not flow through the middle of the garden.

Return to Papanui Road, turn left and then left again into Knowles Street. Where the stream crosses here, there is little to see except a glimpse of a footbridge in a property that has made the stream a feature, instead of ignoring it as some properties do.

Keep going down Knowles Street and turn right into Bretts Road at Rowan Lodge. It is not far down to Innes Road. Turn right and stay on the right footpath for a while. You will come to a bridge with a concrete railing. Over the side is a clear view of the creek. Some mature pungas are growing beside it.

Cross Innes Road to the imaginatively-designed footpath built when the street was widened some years ago. Vegetation has grown thick on both sides of the path, which has become the most scenic walkway along a major street in the city.

St. Albans Creek flows beside the footpath for a short way here before turning to the south again. Continue on to Papanui Road, and go left toward Merivale.

Turn left into Murray Place, which goes right into McDougall Avenue. The stream comes diagonally to the corner of those streets, through an open area of mature trees and landscaping that looks like a park. Although there is no fence, the land is private property, belonging to the next house along in McDougall Avenue. Enjoy the scene from the footpath.

Across the street on the Nurse Maude Memorial Hospital side, the creek's bridge abutment has a tile McDougal Avenue plaque on it.

Return to Papanui Road and walk down to Mansfield Avenue. Cross the street and walk down a short way to the Village Gate Shopping Centre sign, where a driveway to car parks behind the Papanui Road shops leads across a bridge over the creek. You can cross that and another bridge at a bend in the stream. Vegetation alongside the stream has been retained in an example of how to improve the scenery while making room for cars.

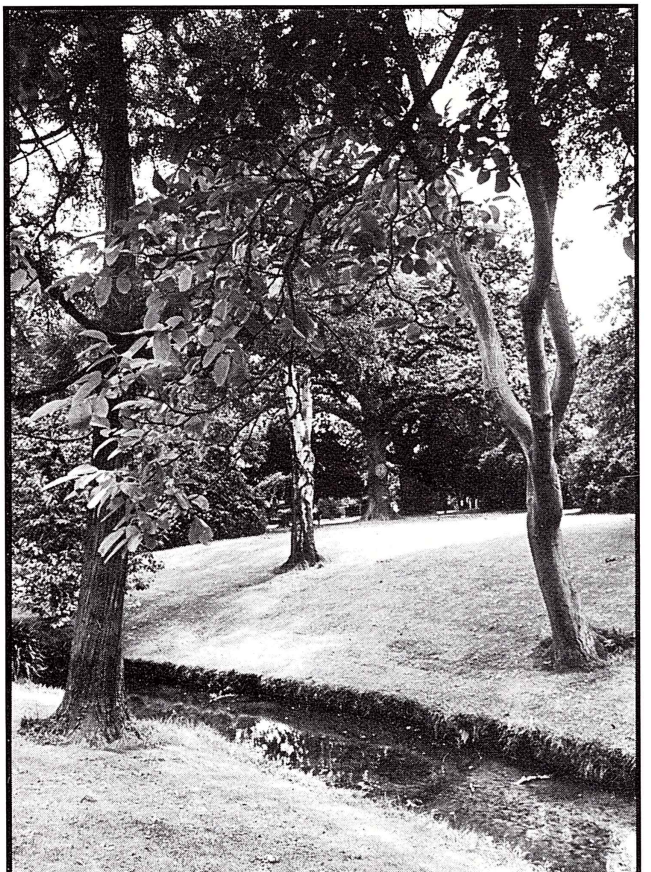
Across the footbridge, enter the shopping building and come out in Papanui Road opposite the Merivale Mall. Stay on the stream side of the street and go down to St. Albans Street.

Left in that street, the stream can be seen running through the front garden of a house.

Return to Papanui Road and turn left into Beverley Street. There is not much to see of the creek, but make a side trip anyway to see the houses up to the point where the street rounds into Devonport Lane.

Back in Papanui Road, walk to Webb Street, St. Albans Creek crosses just past mid-block, and it flows along the front of a property on the right-hand side before it disappears again.

At the meeting of Webb and Bristol Streets, you



St. Albans Creek in Abberley Park

can go either of two ways. Across Bristol Street and to the left is the front entrance of the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind's Fernwood Hostel property. You can walk through here and along a footpath past the end of residential blocks until you reach a back entrance to Abberley Park.

The other way to reach Abberley Park is by turning right into Bristol Street and left into Ranfurly Street. The stream is on your left, then disappears behind the back of Fernwood Hostel. Stay in Ranfurly Street to find a pedestrian lane to your left around a couple of curves. That lane takes you into Abberley Park.

The park has several pathways, two of them alongside the stream. It is worthwhile spending some time in this gem of a park, which has several compartments divided by sight-screening shrubbery and trees. Two of the pathways cross the stream on bridges.

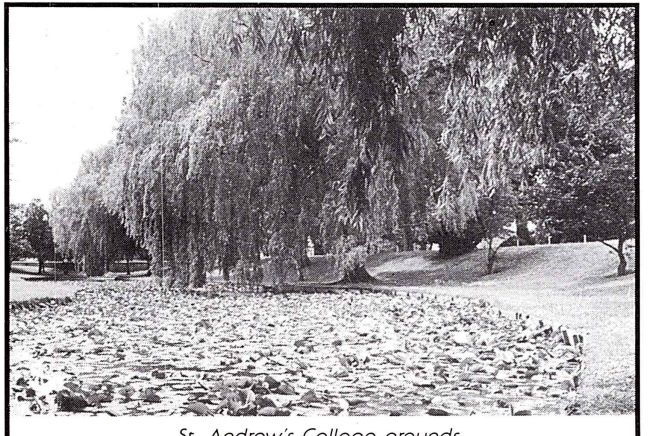
As you leave the park, cross Abberley Crescent and turn left to Kinlock Street, then right in that street. About halfway down the block the stream can be seen again on the right as it changes direction to the north. When you reach Springfield Road, turn left and walk up to St. Albans Street. Turn right and walk a short distance, then cross to find the curve of Westminster Street. Stay on the right footpath to see the stream curving on your right.

You will reach an entrance to the St. Albans School grounds, which has the creek as a boundary

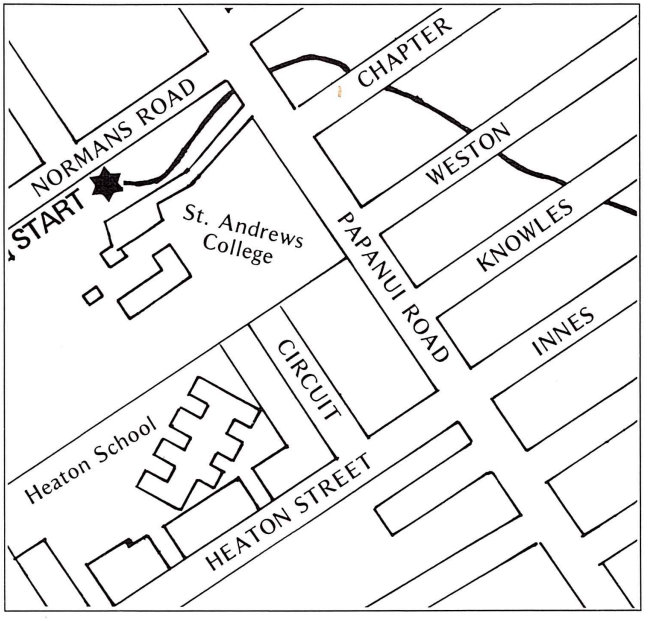
on one side. St. Albans Creek then flows partly underground and partly above ground through English Park.

There is not much to see of it now because it flows through private property, so make your way out of English Park and cross Cranford Street to Oxley Street. Down that block-long street is St. Albans Park.

Come out in Edward Avenue and follow it to Hills Road. Turn right there and walk down to Dudley Street. You will cross the creek on the way. You will come to Stapletons Road down the two tree-lined blocks of Dudley Street, and to the end of St. Albans Creek as it flows into the longer Dudley Creek just to your left.



St. Andrew's College grounds.



HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take any bus that heads up Papanui Road to reach the St. Andrew's College entrance at Normans Road. You can get off earlier at the Merivale shopping centre. To reach Abberley Park, take a Mays Road bus from the square and alight at the intersection of Springfield Road and Abberley Crescent.

To return to Cathedral Square, return to Hills Road and catch a bus heading toward the city.

Dudley Creek saves its best for last

An entrance to St. James Park, north of Dudley Creek.

Dudley Creek used to have a black name in some parts of the city, especially St. Albans, because of the way it flooded neighbourhood streets after rainstorms.

Seen this time of year, the stream seems so slow and controlled, sometimes by boarded banks, that it is hard to see how it could do so much damage.

Since the Christchurch Drainage Board finished the Dudley Creek diversion project some years ago, the stream has been tamed. It still keeps its old channel. Extra water gets siphoned off to Horseshoe Lake, to the east.

Although Dudley Creek sometimes follows an even more private course than the nearby St. Albans Creek, there are good walks in each part of the city it crosses as it slowly winds to the Avon River.

The creek begins in Bishopdale, crossing into Papanui under Greers Road. That is a good place to start following it.

It disappears into private property down the right side of Ruddenklau Lane and stays hidden as it moves in an arc between Condell Avenue and Harris Crescent. Blanch Street, opposite Edgar Mackintosh Park, crosses it, but fences block a view of the stream.

Walk down Condell Avenue to Matsons Avenue and turn left. Dudley Creek's channel can be seen on your left as you reach Windermere Road. Turn right into this tree-shaded street and follow the left hand footpath. Now the creek can be seen clearly as it moves on a diagonal through the block.

You will lose sight of the creek again by Dalriada Street. Turn left here to find it coming out at the end of the block-long street.

Cross St. James Avenue and turn right until you reach Bellvue Avenue, then turn left and walk down toward the railway tracks.

The stream comes out into the open again through properties near the tracks. Some pretty gardens have been built on its banks. When you reach the tracks, walk up the pathway into St. James Park. This superb suburban park is worth more than a passing glance, and is a good reason for following Dudley Creek at this end.

Return to Bellvue Avenue at the tracks and walk through the pedestrian underpass to the other half of the street. Go on to Papanui Road and turn right into Blighs Road. If you turn right a few steps into Blighs Road, you will meet the stream again. It has come from the railway tracks and under Blair Avenue to reach Blighs Road.

Before it flows under Papanui Road, it passes through the Papanui Police Station property and in front of some houses.

Cross Papanui Road and turn right to Perry Street. From here, turn left. There will be a few rewarding views of the creek for some time, but the neighbourhood is interesting.

From Perry Street, turn right into Rayburn Avenue and left into Paparoa Street. Then turn right in Claremont Avenue, right into Tomes Road and left into Scotson Avenue.

Go left in Mays Road, then right into Rutland Street and left in Weston Road.

All along this way, you will cross the stream's course.

In Weston Road, you will be south of the creek as it goes through a long stretch of mid-block private property.

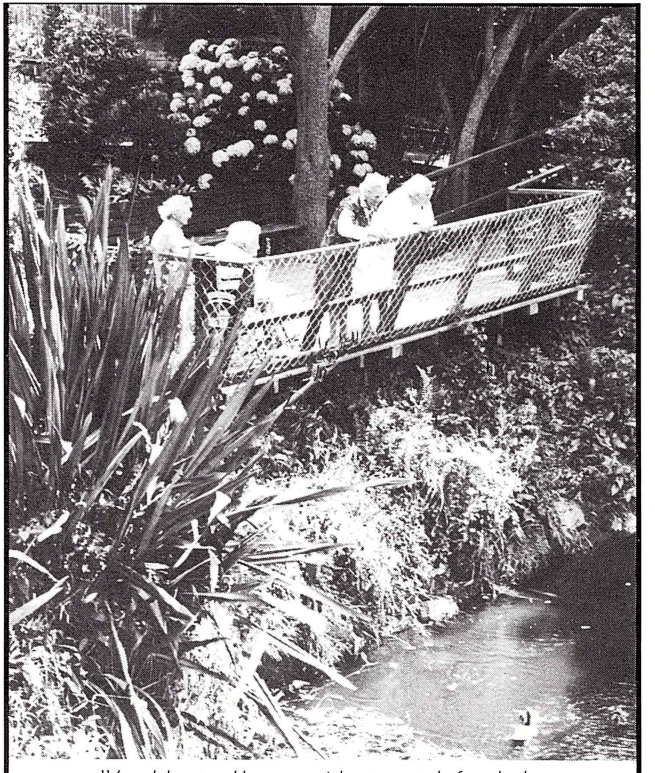
About halfway down the Weston Road block, on your right, is a long public way leading to Malvern Park. It crosses two blocks, and is wider than most similar lanes. You get a good view of the hills, and since you cannot see the creek, a walk down to Innes Road is a good detour. The public way is flanked by grass and trees.

Turn left in Innes Road, then left in Cranford Street. At the St. Albans Fire Station, on the right side of Cranford Street, you can see Dudley Creek at its best. The station grounds lie on both sides of the creek.

Keep going to McFaddens Road, then turn right. The creek can be seen again on your right, then goes out of sight as you turn into Ranger Street and walk towards Kellys Road.

Walk along the right-hand footpath in Kellys Road. Toward the end of that street the creek is seen in the gardens of houses.

When you reach Innes Road, turn right and cross the street where Dudley Creek turns south. Walk down Manuka Street and veer left into Hills Road.



Woodchester Home residents watch for ducks in Dudley Creek.

As you walk down the right hand footpath in Hills Road, the creek can be seen again in private gardens, many of them nicely landscaped.

Dudley Creek eventually crosses Aylesford Street and comes into the intersection of Hills Road, Warrington Street and Shirley Road.

Cross to Shirley Road and walk down the right hand footpath to the Shirley Community Centre. South of you, the creek is crossing Slater Street and flowing south of the community centre.

Turn right in Chancellor Street, then left along Julius Terrace, a lovely block that meets Stapletons Road. At its end, Shirley Stream comes in from the north to meet the main creek.

As you turn right in Stapletons Road, you will find pathways closer to the bank. The walking is better there, both for the scenery and because is is away from traffic.

A cycle bridge, the transformation of a former vehicle bridge, crosses the stream at Guild Street.

Keep walking on the pathways until you reach the Churchill Courts Home for the Aged grounds. Just past here, St. Albans Creek enters the stream.

Cross Stapletons Road and backtrack to Averill Street. Turn right and walk to North Parade. Dudley Creek bisects three residential blocks south of that part of the walk.

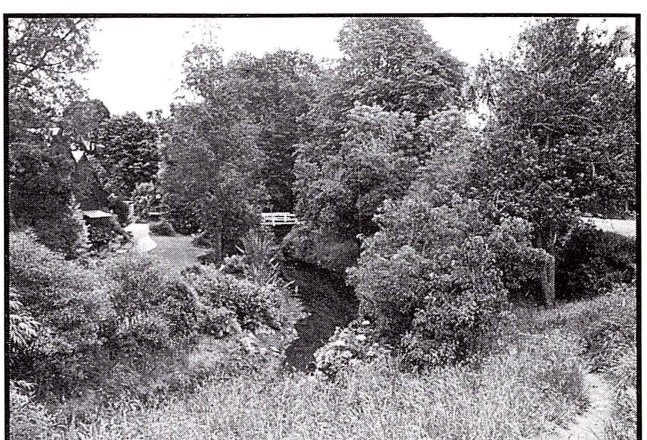
In North Parade, cross to the right-hand side of the street and walk on the footpath up to Banks Avenue. This is another fine part of the walk, with the creek flowing through the properties of homes and institutions on your right.

Dudley Creek saves its best for last. As you go right into Banks Avenue, you will find another series of pathways close to the creek.

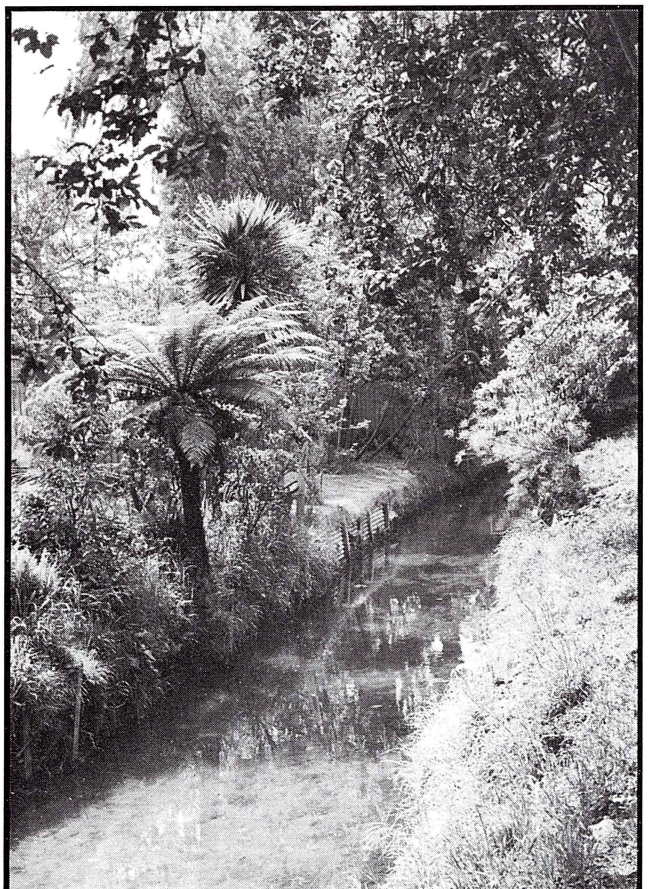
Along here, some new houses have been built to take advantage of the stream setting.

At Woodchester Home, you will see a wooden deck where residents can relax under the trees. It extends out above the stream.

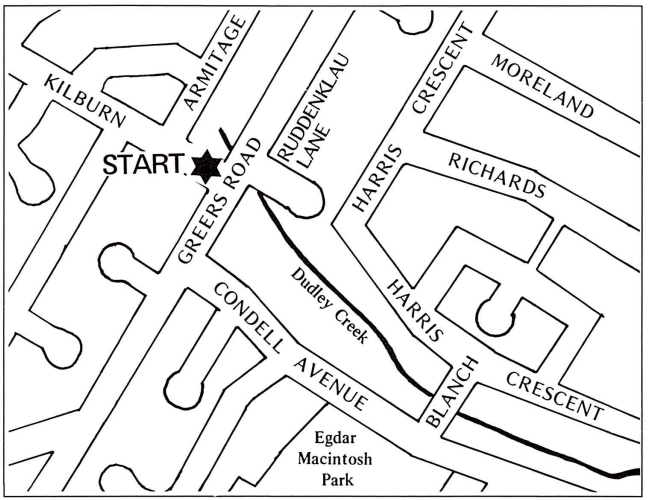
Dudley Creek ends soon at River Road, where it flows into the Avon River. Because of the tides, the creek's water level fluctuates every day in its lower reaches.



Dudley Creek from the Banks Avenue track.



Dudley Creek from a path along Stapletons Road.



HOW TO GET THERE

To reach the corner of Condell Avenue and Greers Road, take a Leacroft Street bus from the Square. Any No. 1 bus via Papanui Road will take you that way if you want to start a walk where the stream crosses Papanui Road. If you want to start at the intersection of Shirley and Hills Roads, take an Effingham Street bus. Either a Liggins Street or Bampton Street bus will take you to the intersection of McBratneys and Gayhurst Roads, two blocks east of the end of Dudley Creek.

To return to Cathedral Square, walk down McBratneys Road to Gayhurst Road and catch a bus heading toward the city.

Horseshoe Lake. . .

Horseshoe Lake track near the lake's outlet.

. . . walking on the wild side

If the Avon River had not decided to seek a new channel somewhere in the dim dark past, Christchurch would have been without one of its last remaining wild areas.

Horseshoe Lake is probably the remnant of a former meander of the Avon. Anchored now by a big pumping station at its eastern end, the lake might seem to be artificial, but it was there when the first Maoris arrived.

They called the lake Wakakariki, and had a settlement on its shores.

Until recently, much of the lake's wetlands were a tangle of trees and there was no easy way into the wilderness. A few years ago, the City Council built a track through the thicket and opened up one of Canterbury's most unusual places for walking.

Almost 10 years ago, dense willow growth along the Lake Terrace Road bank was cut out by the Council and Drainage Board. The bank had dropped quickly from the road until then, to an unstable, swampy shelf next to the lake.

Sediment from Horseshoe Lake dredging was used to help build up the bank.

The crack willow is still the dominant canopy species round the lake. Willow planting probably started in the early 1900s. Bogs are found where springy mats of willow roots cover an area in the bush.

The Horseshoe Lake Reserve's management plan calls for extending the woodland zone about 20 metres into the grazing land inside the loop, and providing walking access. Part of the low-lying wetland may be retired from grazing then planted in native trees and shrubs.

Because of the fragile terrain through part of the thicket, track builders went to a great deal of trouble to form a path that would cause the least damage. In many places, half-metre sections of willow have been laid side by side, flat side up, and linked with fencing wire.

The track can be started in three places. At the Broomfield Terrace end of Burwood Park, near the adventure playground, a stile leads over the fence to grazing pasture. The track is not marked through here, but head up the middle of the pasture into the trees, where you will find another fence and stile.

From here, the track is marked across open ground for a way before entering the main part of the reserve. Before long, you will be walking beside the lake's west arm. The track then goes into the woods until it comes out at a footbridge across the arm.

The lake channel is narrow here. Just across the

bridge, the track goes up a flight of steps to the tableland off Horseshoe Lake Road. It leads to the right, along the edge of the shelf.

Earthmoving work has been done here, and it has obscured part of the trail. Keep near the edge, looking into the thicket, until you come to some steps leading down again.

Shortly, you will come to a fork. The track from the left comes in from a bridge across the Dudley Creek diversion inlet and the Lake Terrace Road side of the lake.

Turn to the right to find another footbridge over the wider channel.

Across the channel, the wilderness that was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1904 starts in earnest. The log track winds through dense stands of trees and comes out at one point to a place opposite stormwater inlets to the lake.

Then the track leads away from the lakeshore as it goes into the bush. Soon, it comes to a wide area of large flax and native trees. To your right is a flax-enclosed pond, where the last raupo in what used to be a large swamp is growing.

There is a small log bridge across the pond's outlet as the trail starts to come out of the flax. The rest of the way is heavily wooded, but without the undergrowth.

An old stream channel runs inside the reserve, and is crossed by another footbridge.

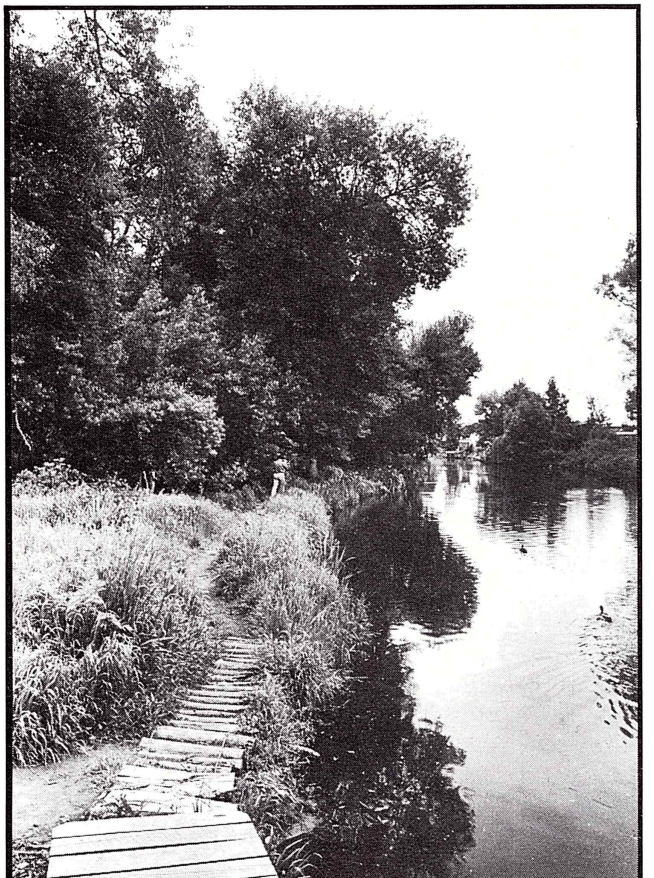
At times, the lake level can get high and cause the ground to float underfoot through part of the bush, but places that used to flood in wet weather should be clear now.

Near the place where the track comes out again to grassy banks, the pathway splits. The path to the right stays in the trees longer. The main path leaves the bush where the clearing starts.

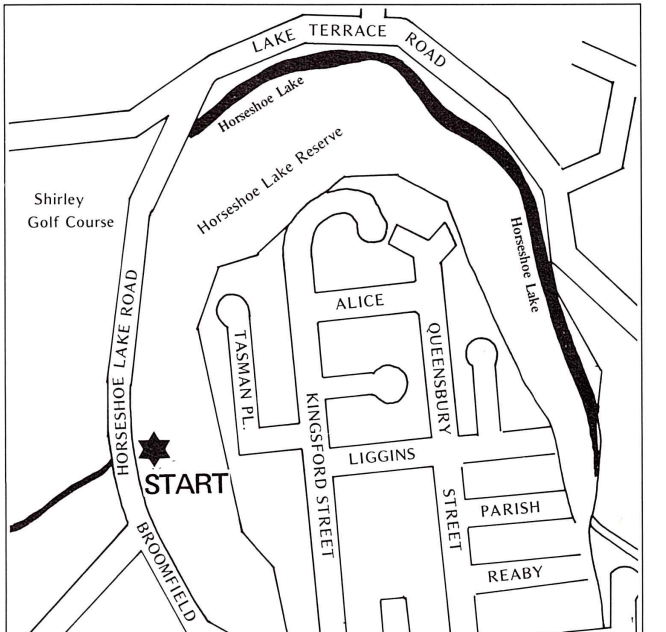
When you reach this point, you have come much of the way down the east arm of Horseshoe Lake. The first exit to your right is into Liggins Street, but keep following the bank opposite houses on the far side of the lake.

Where the trees come down to meet the lake, the marked track starts again. For the first time, it is just beside the water and laid with logs. You can exit to Parish Street or Reaby Street along here as the lake bends towards the Avon and the flood relief pumping station appears downstream.

A new track access has been opened up past that structure, so you can continue along the bank and walk to the right side of the fence. Through the gap you will come to the pumping station drive off New Brighton Road and soon arrive at the point where Horseshoe Lake drains into the river at Kerrs Reach.



Part of the Horseshoe Lake log walk.



HOW TO GET THERE

Take a Liggins Street bus from the Square and alight in New Brighton Road if you want to start the track from Burwood Park and Broomfield Terrace. Stay on the bus and get off in Reaby Street if you want to start from that entrance. Take an Effingham Street bus to reach Burwood Park.

To return to Cathedral Square, take a bus heading toward the city in New Brighton Road.

Splendid parks of Waimairi Stream

Waimairi Stream at Daresbury Park.

Waimairi Stream is known mostly by the company it keeps. Along its course are some fine parks.

The main watercourse of the Waimairi starts further out in the country than any other suburban stream. Although it is often dry, the channel can be traced out past Russley Road.

Avonhead Park Cemetery, off Hawthornden Road, is a good place to start a walk along the stream, even if it is a bit isolated. The cemetery without headstones lies on the south side of the channel, which is wide and deep out there.

The channel passes under Hawthornden Road and Westgrove Avenue before it reaches Withells Road, where there is another good view of it through private property.

Probably the best place to begin most walks is Burnside Park. Enter the park either from Memorial Avenue or from the Avonhead Road access to the playing fields.

Along the access drive, on the right, is one channel of the stream. It meets another, coming in from the left, before you reach the car park. Over at the water tower, you will find the start of that channel. It is as good a place as any to start downstream.

Even without water, the stream is picturesque through here as it winds between mature trees in a shallow channel. For part of the way, an obstacle course uses the streambed.

Cross the stream to the left-hand side when you come to a culvert, and follow the channel from higher up. Although tall grass sometimes hides it, there is a path under the trees. If it is overgrown, keep to the edge of the playing fields.

At the end of the park, the stream continues on through private property. Turn left along the park boundary until you come to a public way on your right that leads to Hadlow Place. Follow that street to Grahams Road and turn left, then left again into Waimairi Road. The stream is again in a deep channel here, along the left-hand side of the road.

Cross Waimairi Road and follow the footpath for safety. On the stream side, you can see more, but there is no place to walk without getting into traffic, especially on a blind curve.

Return to the left hand side of the road where it bends slightly left. The stream is again seen here, but only shortly before going into private property again.

Walk down Waimairi Road to Greers Road, then turn left to see where the stream, now with a respectable amount of water in it, comes out into the open under a private bridge and through a pretty garden on your left.

Cross the road here and turn back to Tudor Avenue. Turn left into Tudor Avenue and walk to Gothic Place, on your left.

A few steps along Gothic Place is the back entrance to Ray Blank Park, another of Waimari's scenic side trips. Walk round the back fenceline of the park to see across into land still used for grazing, along one branch of the Waimairi. The main stream is now further away to the north-east from here. Sheep can often be seen among the trees.

Continue on round the park perimeter and come to Maidstone Road. Turn left into Maidstone Road and walk to the Ilam Road roundabout.

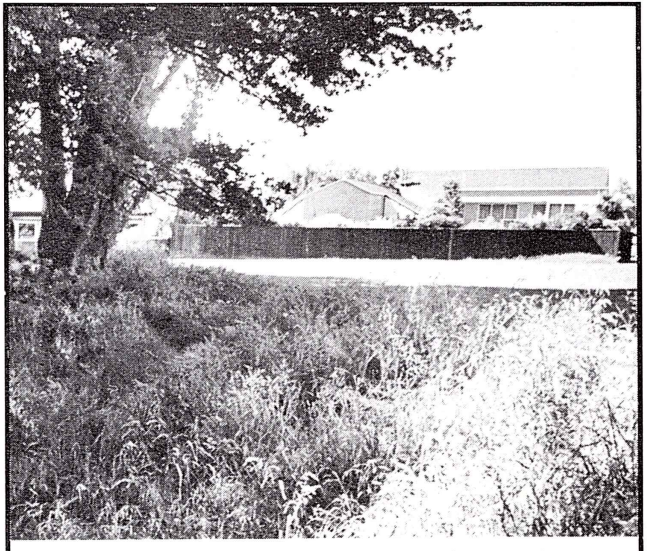
There is little to see of either stream branch further up Ilam Road, so just walk a short distance and turn right into Wilfrid Street. You will soon come to Barlow Street and the meeting, just to the left, of the Waimairi's branches.

A footbridge over the stream, just down from the confluence, leads to a public way and Coldstream Court. It is unusual in Christchurch to be able to see a meeting of two streams from a public place. Town houses are built high above the streams.

A more traditional scene of private gardens leading up to the stream is seen from the other side of the bridge.

Walk along Coldstream Court to Hamilton Avenue, then turn left along the right-hand footpath and take a long stroll down the street to Clyde Road.

From there, turn right to a bridge where the



Neighbourhood of Waimairi Stream at Burnside Park.

Waimairi comes out into public view alongside the Medbury School grounds.

Cross Clyde Road here to Medbury Terrace, which follows the stream for about a block and curves where the channel goes into a long bend around the south end of Fendalton Domain, Keep to your left in the domain's carpark and cross the bridge at its end.

At this point, the stream is only a stone's throw from the Avon River, which is crossed by the Puriri Street bridge just across Kotare Street.

Waimairi Stream through residential properties.

Over the domain bridge, spend some time in the park. You can walk along the grassed streambank to a large tree on the park's western boundary. In the trees seen off toward Fendalton Road is a playground.

When you have stayed long enough in the domain return to the footbridge and follow a sealed path to your left, through a bicycle barrier at the back of Fendalton Bowling Club buildings.

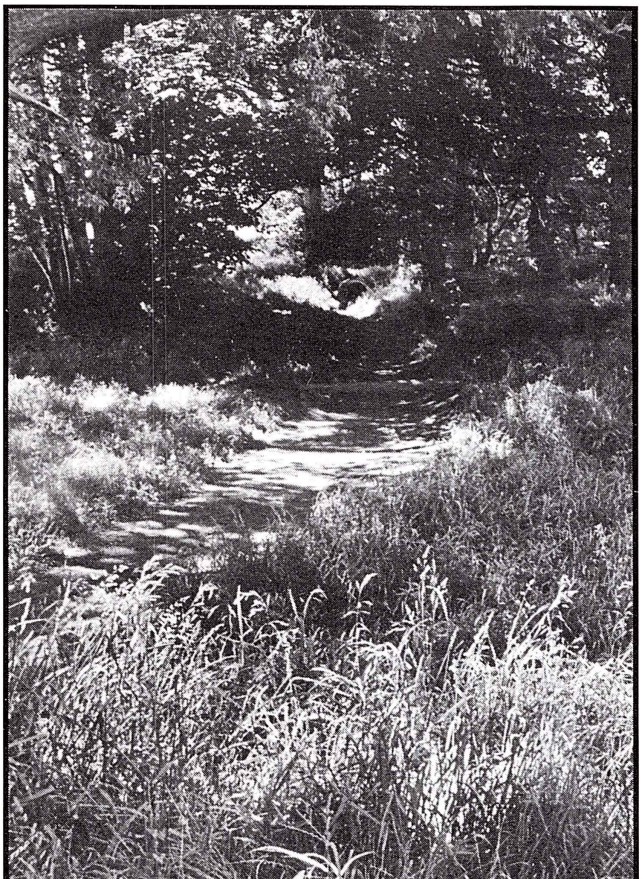
Through here is an unusual public way through native and exotic trees. You can walk nearer the stream, too. The pathway comes out in the bowling club carpark. Walk through it and to your right to reach Makora Street. Views of the stream can be had from bridge railings to your right. Continue on to Weka Street and turn left. Unfortunately the stream goes back into seclusion again for two long blocks.

Walk down to Straven Road, where there is good viewing again from both sides of the street. Cross to the far side of Straven Road and go left along the footpath. At Royds Street, walk left to reach the back entrance to Daresbury Park. Tour buses often stop at the end of Royds Street to let travellers see and photograph the street's award-winning gardens.

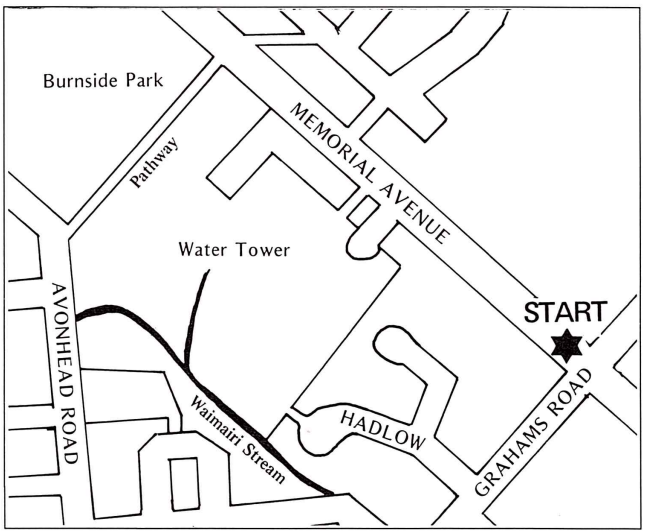
At the street's end is a fountain and the way into the next park. Daresbury has a fine arching bridge and an excellent playground. It is probably the most scenic place to see the stream.

From Daresbury Park, turn left in Harakeke Street to almost immediately reach another lane that takes you across the next-to-last public bridge across the Waimairi Stream. Looking upstream from the bridge, you can see a small branch stream coming in from Fendalton Domain.

Walk along the lane to Fendalton Road and turn right to come to the railway line and Mona Vale. Enter Mona Vale to find the stream's last bridge and the water's confluence with the Wairarapa Stream.



A dry Waimairi Stream creekbed in Burnside Park.

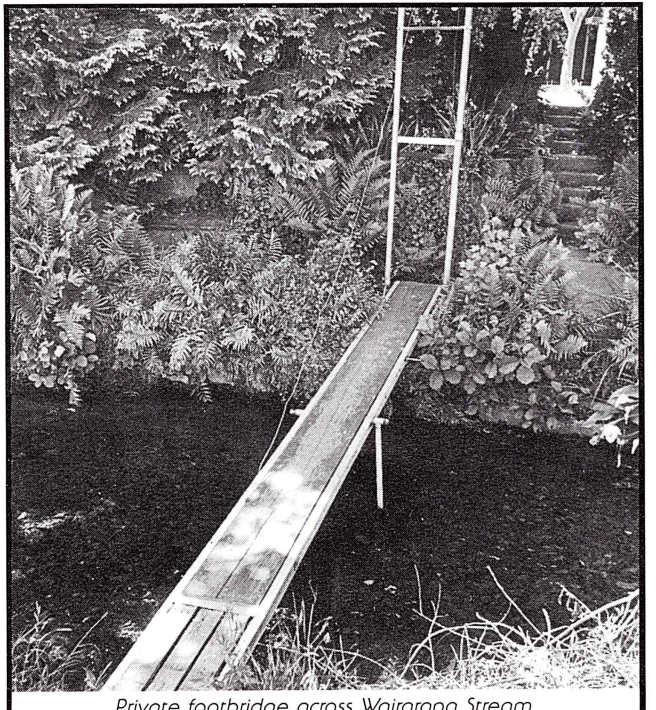


HOW TO GET THERE

Take a Merrin Street bus to the corner of Grahams Road and Memorial Avenue, and walk down Memorial Avenue to the second pedestrian path into Burnside Park. Stay on the bus to the end of the line at Withells Road to get closer to Avonhead Park Cemetery, which is two blocks away. If you want to start walking at Ray Blank Park, take a Woodbury Street bus past the university campus to the park.

To return to Cathedral Square, catch a bus heading towards the city in Fendalton Road, opposite the Mona Vale gatehouse.

Along the Wairarapa—1



Private footbridge across Wairarapa Stream at Cobham Intermediate School grounds.

You would not think it from a look at the dry channel near its head, but the Wairarapa Stream is the city's major waterway apart from the rivers.

Residents along the Wairarapa upstream from Jellie Park remember times when it had a more regular flow. Now, stormwater provides that flow.

Still, it is worthwhile starting a walk where the channel first appears, inside a large property in Grahams Road, near Sevenoaks Drive. The channel is mainly hidden by a fence, but its presence is obvious from the street.

Turn into Sevenoaks Drive for a pleasant walk through the suburbs. Opposite Springbank Street is a public way to your right. That leads to a bridge across the stream and comes out in Wayside Avenue.

Return to Sevenoaks Drive and follow it to its end in Greers Road. Cross the street and turn right to find the Wairarapa as it enters Jellie Park.

Walk on the grass bank above the stream, which usually has at least some water by this time. There is a good little children's play ground along here.

Jellie Park can also be reached by turning left into Greers Road, then right into Clyde Road. Then you come to Truman Road, on your right. This pretty street, with its mature trees, is a good alternative route to the park. You will come to a public way on your right, with a substantial bridge that crosses to the Jellie Park Lake.

One of the Wairarapa's tributaries reaches the lake at its top end, Hewlings Stream starts out beyond Grahams Road, too, but near Memorial Avenue.

Where its channel enters public land, there is a sealed cycle path that can be walked down to Jellie Park. From the intersection of Memorial Avenue and Grahams Road, take the footpath into the magnificent trees of Flay Park.

When Grahams Road was widened some years ago, the trees were saved. At the end of the park, a sealed path breaks away to the right and down to the stream channel, which is usually dry.

You can also find the stream by walking into the subdivision of interesting new houses that line Rembrandt Place. A sealed path at the end of that street leads over a rise to the stream.

That path meets the main pathway from Grahams Road, and then across a bridge to the left-hand side of the creek. From there, it is an interesting walk through Burnside High School grounds—downhill from the school buildings—to Greers Road.

Cross to the grass of Jellie Park and walk along the stream until it reaches the lake. You can easily do a circuit of the picturesque lake, partly on a sealed path.

The lake curls round the hill that contains the Jellie Park pools.

About 40 litres of water a second is pumped into the lake from an outlet below the pools. That water is from a well, and has been discharged from a heat exchanger used to provide heating for the pools above.

The lake's overflow slides swiftly down a spillway to the Wairarapa. A good view of the spillway can be had either from its sides or from the bridge leading to Truman Road.

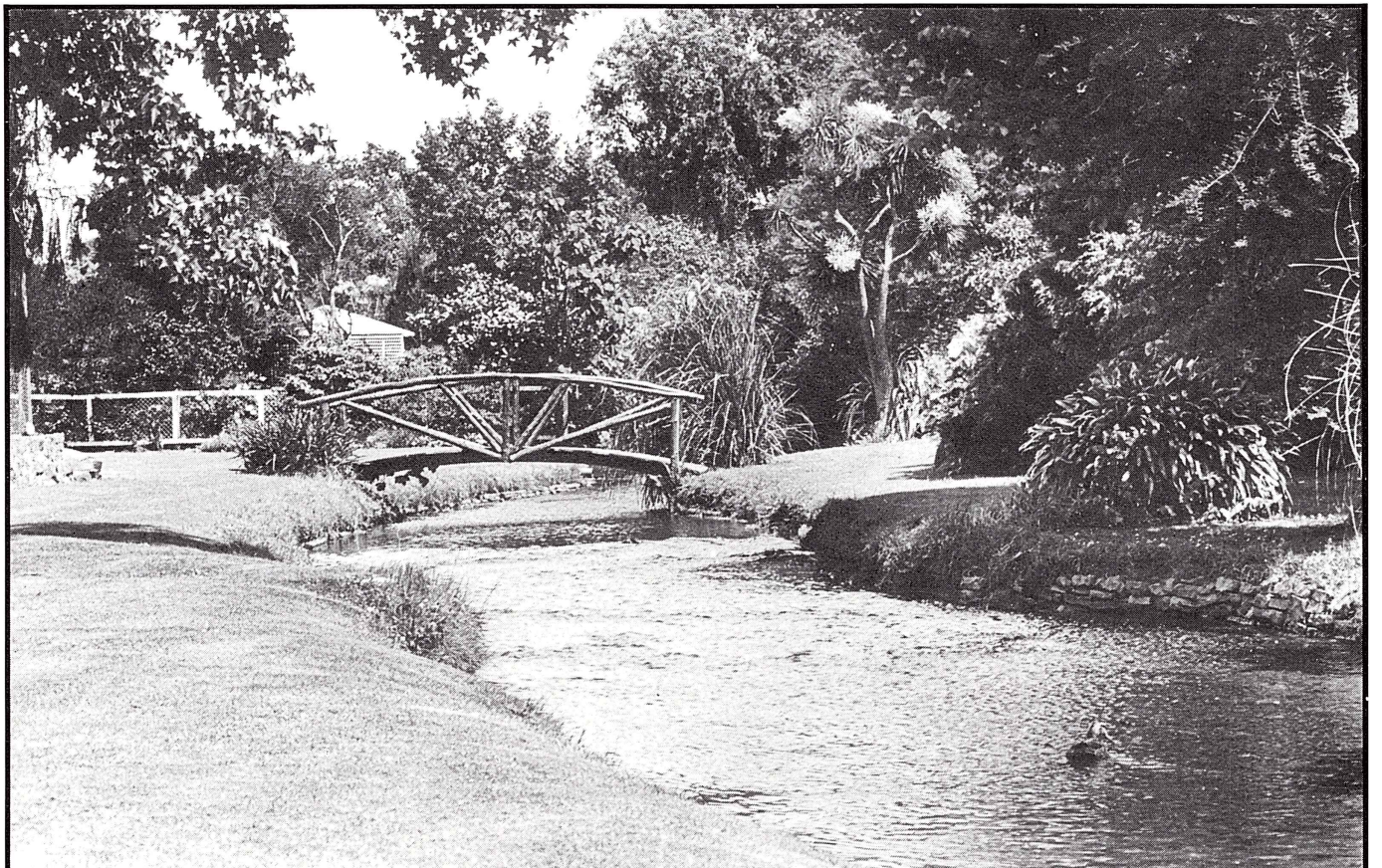
Keep following the stream in Jellie Park until you have come to private property, then veer right to leave the park.

Cross Ilam Road and turn right to find a public way on your left. That leads between two fences and into the grounds of Cobham Intermediate School and Burnside Primary School.

The sealed pathway skirts the right side of the intermediate school buildings before coming out into the open. These grounds form one of the nicest public areas in suburban Christchurch, partly because of the Wairarapa Stream, which flows along one boundary.

To take the best advantage of the stream, walk all the way over to the left of the pathway, where the stream reappears beside private property and walk down the bank. You will get good views into gardens on the other bank, and there is also a small grove of trees on your side.

The stream meanders, and there is no hindrance to walking. It is one of the longest stretches of suburban stream unbroken by private property.



Wairarapa Stream near the Waiwetu Reserve footbridge.

You will come to houses on the other side that have narrow draw-bridges that can be lowered to the school grounds.

Round the last stream curve, you will come to a place opposite Wai-iti Terrace. Past here, the stream goes into private property and soon meets the Wai-iti Stream, which is shown on some drainage maps as a branch of the Wairarapa.

The confluence is hidden from view in private property. To walk down the Wai-iti, start in Brookside Terrace at Murdoch Street and follow the channel down two long blocks to Ilam Road. The channel here is often dry, but many houses have made imaginative use of it in their landscaping.

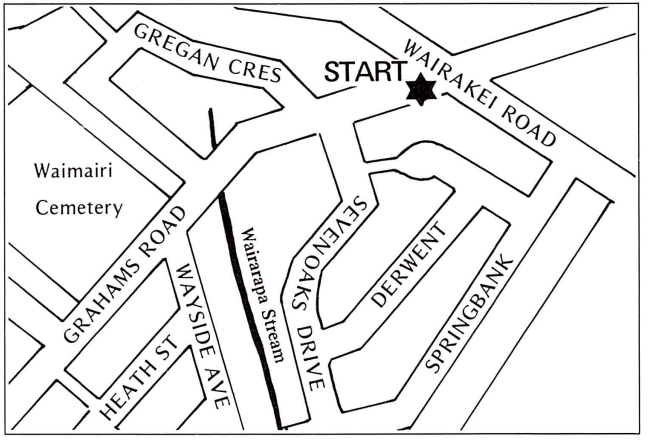
On the far side of the Ilam Road culvert, the stream suddenly has water, so it is obvious that springs in this area are active.

The stream can be seen on private property from the culvert abutment. Turn left in Ilam Road to Bryndwr Road, then right to Wai-iti Terrace.

Go right to the point where the stream passes under the street. That is the only place the stream can be seen, since it does not pass through public land.

At the Clyde Road end of Wai-iti Terrace, cross to see the stream from a bridge on its last stretch to the Wairarapa. Because of all the trees on the banks, this is one of the nicest views of a suburban stream in Christchurch.

Back at the Cobham Intermediate School grounds, the pathway leads out to Sunningvale Lane. Walk along here to Gleneagles Terrace and turn right, then left into Woodford Terrace. This street ends when it turns into Otara Street, and a reserve at its end leads out to Clyde Road and the Fendalton Library.



HOW TO GET THERE

To start near the Wairarapa Stream's head, take a Wairakei Road bus and alight near Grahams Road. The same bus can be taken to reach the start of the Wai-iti Stream walk. Alight near Murdoch Street and walk down to Brookside Terrace. To reach Flay Park, take a Merrin Street bus up Memorial Avenue to Grahams Road.

To return to Cathedral Square, take a bus heading toward the city in Clyde Road.

Walking along the Wairarapa—2

To walk along or near the last half of the Wairarapa Stream, start near the Fendalton Library in Clyde Road.

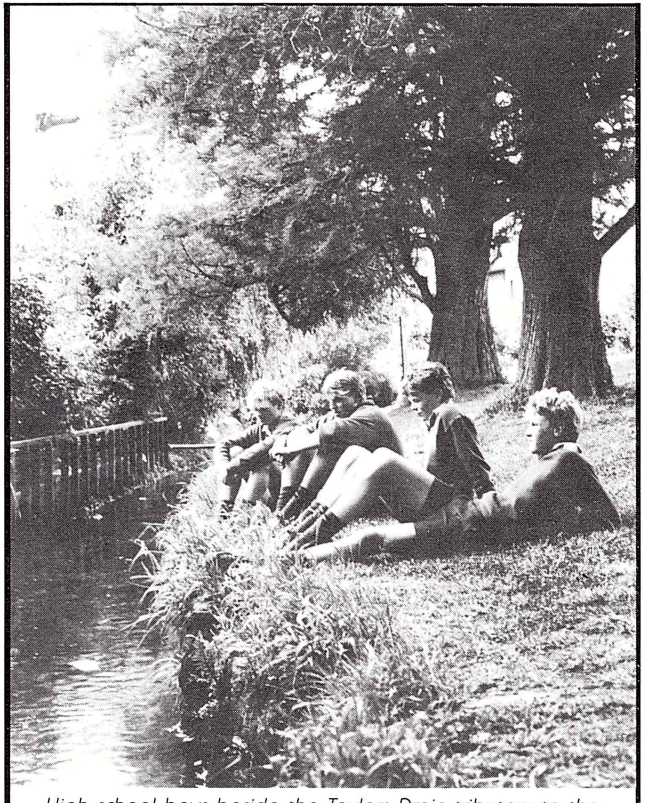
Walking towards the Waimairi District Council building, you will come to a bridge abutment on your right which has a fine view of the stream as it flows between the gardens of private houses.

At Jeffreys Road, turn to your right and walk to a point opposite Chepstow Street. On your right is a public way that leads to the Waiwetu Reserve. The reserve has a boundary on the stream and a footbridge across the Waiwetu Street.

Cross the bridge to get a look upstream across lawns to a small arched footbridge. The reserve is a good place for picnics and has a children's playground.

From Waiwetu Street, cross back to the reserve and walk to another public way through to Thornycroft Street. Stay on the right footpath of that street to see down long drives that cross the stream. Along here, work is continuing on the reinstatement of Sir John Hall's old house, which used to be in Park Terrace.

When you reach Glandovey Road, cross it and turn to the right. Where the stream flows under the road, new town houses have replaced an old



High school boys beside the Taylors Drain tributary to the Wairarapa Stream, in Elmwood Park.

house. The construction has opened up a view downstream, and it is interesting to see the new streambank landscaping.

The Wairarapa now leaves the public eye for a while. It also broadens so much that it is sometimes wider than the Avon River in this part of the suburbs. Springs appear at places in the channel, but the build-up of silt over the years has obscured them.

Even the strength of storm currents has not been enough to scour away the silt. The water is still just deep enough for children's canoes.

One homeowner has a beautiful colour photograph of white herons standing in this part of the stream in the days when they regularly came for fish. Now that the fish are less abundant, the herons have stopped their visits.

To reach the stream again, continue down Glandovey Road to Fendalton Road. Turn left and walk down a long block to Snowdon Road.

Turn left into that street and turn left when it reaches Idris Road. Here you will come into Bradnor Road, a short street that ends at the stream.

The vehicle bridge that caused a neighbourhood protest some years ago is now built. Although constructed sympathetically with their surroundings, the bridge and its approach drive have taken land away from the small reserve at the end of Bradnor Road. There is still room to picnic and enjoy views up and down the stream. The footbridge here is private.

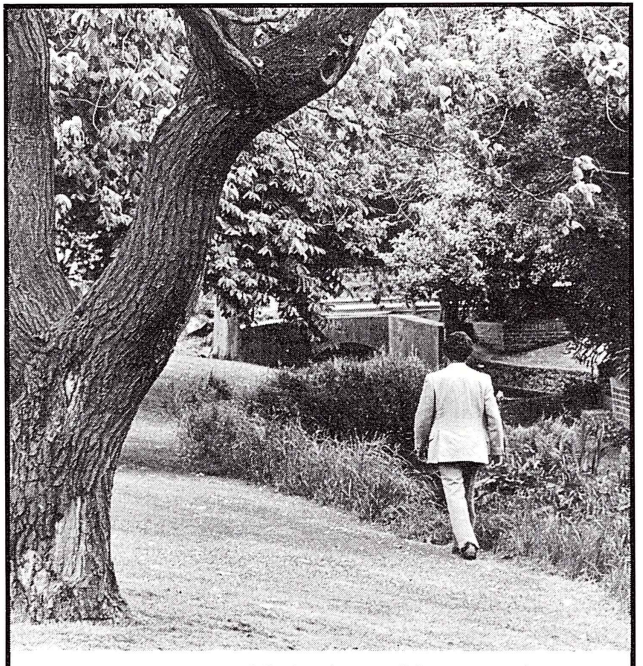
Return to Idris Road and turn left. You will soon come to a curve that marks the next spot where the Wairarapa comes into view. The scene from both sides of the street here is interesting. You can often see colourful boats moored in the shallow stream.

The Glandovey Road roundabout is nearby. Turn right here and walk up Glandovey Road to the railway tracks. If you walk down the tracks to the place where they cross the stream, you can get another look in both directions. One of the stream's deeper pools is on the upstream side of the bridge.

Return to Glandovey Road and turn right to the major intersection where the road becomes Heaton Street. At this point, a side trip up Strowan Road to the Normans Road shopping centre is worth the effort.

As you approach the railway tracks again here, a stream comes in on your left. This is Taylors Drain, an unfortunate name for a pretty little stream that is one of the Wairarapa's tributaries. A triangle of Railways' land has been beautified beside the stream, with footbridge access. Go back down the left hand side of Strowan Road to Heaton Street and turn left.

You will soon cross Taylors Drain again as it comes through Elmwood Park. Enter the park and walk upstream along the grass bank until you come to



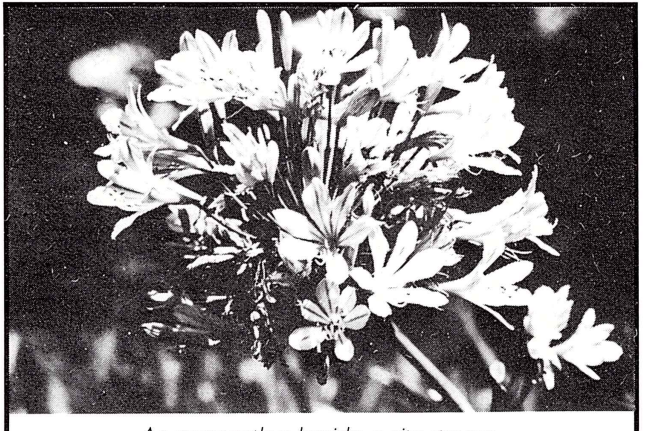
Strolling in Elmwood Park, along a Wairarapa tributary.

private property. This stretch of stream is one of the more pleasant places to get away from it all along the Wairarapa.

To reach the main stream again, leave Elmwood Park and cross Heaton Street to a large property on the corner. A high stone wall blocks a view of the side stream most of the way to the intersection, but a cut-back section next to the drive offers a good view from the footpath of a magnificent garden.

Cross the intersection and turn left to find the Wairarapa Stream again. There is a long railing on your right that runs above the stream as it makes a wide sweep to the south along Wairarapa Terrace. The side stream from Elmwood Park joins the Wairarapa under you. You can soon walk on grass through a triangular reserve beside the stream.

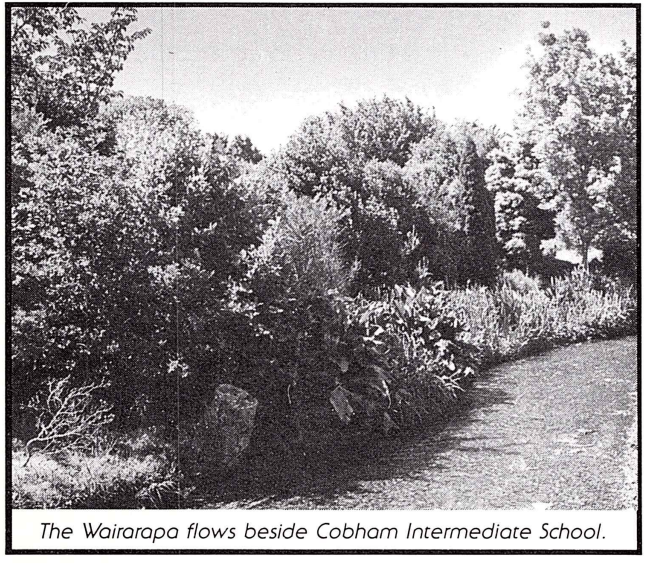
Cross the bridge at the end of that reserve and continue along the bank beside Wairarapa Terrace. The stream is completely open on your right, but watch for traffic. There is not much room between the street and the steep bank.



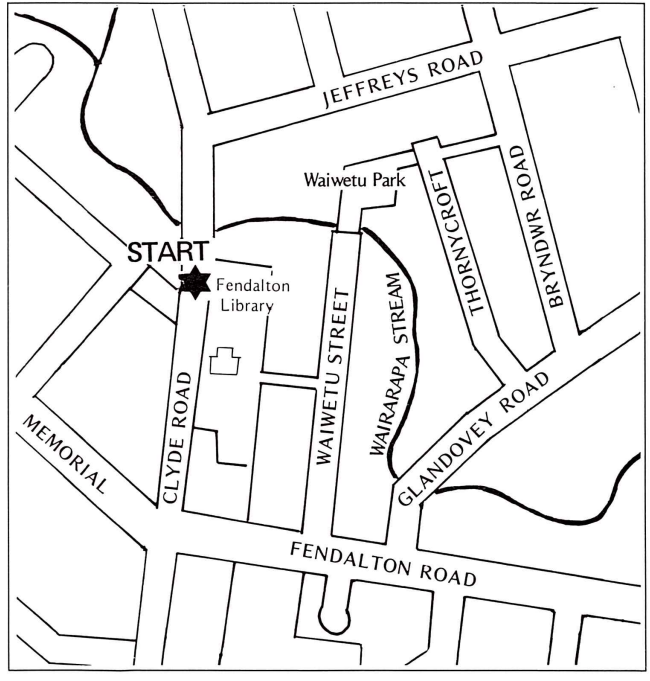
An agapanthus beside a city stream.

After you pass the end of Fulton Avenue to your left, you will find a small track beside a hedge that leads down to the stream, away from the road. You can stay among the trees until you reach the Garden Road bridge. Cross that bridge for a look downstream before returning to Wairarapa Terrace.

From here, the stream stays hidden through private property until it reaches Fendalton Road and Mona Vale. Walk down a long block in Wairarapa Terrace and turn right to the stream. The views upstream and downstream from here are two of the finest in Christchurch.



The Wairarapa flows beside Cobham Intermediate School.



HOW TO GET THERE

Take a Burnside Crescent bus to Fendalton Library in Clyde Road to start the second section of the Wairarapa. To reach Elmwood Park, take a Wairakei Road bus to Glandovey Road.

To return to Cathedral Square, take a bus heading toward the city in Fendalton Road, opposite the Mona Vale gatehouse.

From parks to campus along the Okeover

Okeover Stream is a small companion of the Avon River that flows through the University of Canterbury campus before merging with the river.

Although early parts of the stream are dry most of the time, there is a distinct channel that stays above ground except through Christchurch Teachers' College land.

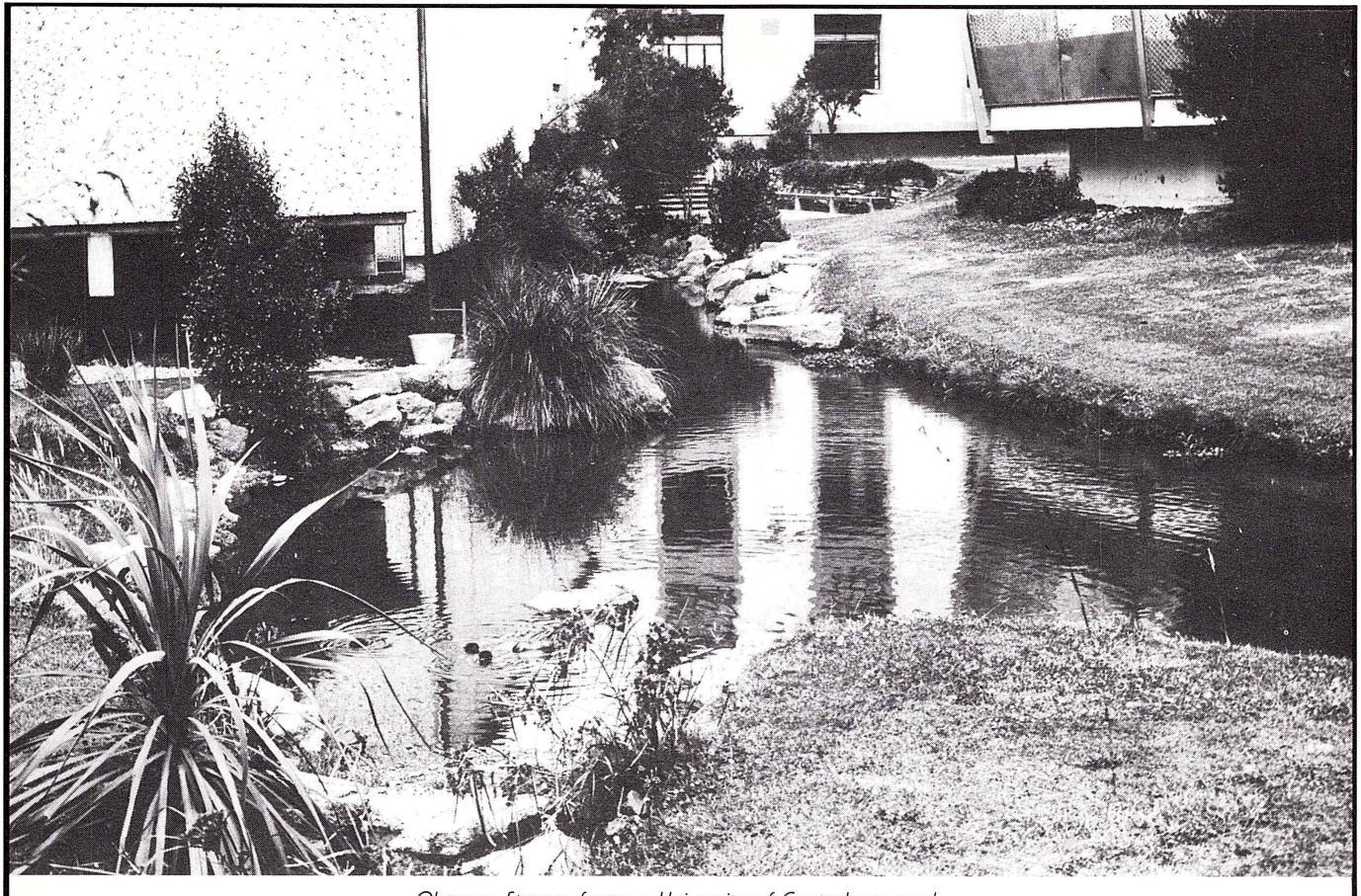
The main reason for following the Okeover's channel is to view the surroundings, not the water. Start a bit away from the channel, in Tall Tree Avenue. In that neighbourhood, you are not far from the Avon's Source.

Walk up the street to the tall gums that mark the eastern boundary of Stewarts Bush Reserve, a lovely neighbourhood park. A pathway wanders through the park from Glenharrow Avenue and on to Yardley Street.

Go right in Yardley Street and cross to the far side of Woodbury Street. On that side, you will find a pedestrian way between houses through to Crosbie Park.

Once inside the park, you will walk through a wide dip whose grassed slopes mark the early channel of Okeover Stream. Keep going into the park or walk along the channel bottom. Over near Woodbury Street is a nicely landscaped cluster of trees, shubbery and a footbridge over the watercourse.

You can often follow the dry channel down a



Okeover Stream forms a University of Canterbury pool.

path to Withells Road, but it is something of a scramble at the end to reach that street. Instead, walk down Woodbury Street after leaving the park and cross Withells Road at the intersection where Staveley Street takes over from Woodbury Street.

Continue on the left hand footpath in Staveley Street to Colina Street. Turn left there to come upon the stream bed to your left, still a long way down from the street. Cross the street to see where the channel goes, then turn left to Brigadoon Place.

There is a small reserve on the corner here. Walk through it to a public way at the far corner. That access leads to Highfield Place. Follow that street down to Maidstone Road.

Down Avonhead Road there is not much to see except a "Danger, Keep Out" sign above the stream's channel, so continue down Maidstone Road to Westmont Street. Turn right in Westmont Street, then left in Glenside Avenue. That will bring you out to the Teachers' College campus.

Walk to the left of the college buildings and out into the grounds facing the university campus. Near the tennis courts, you will come to a concrete structure in the ground that marks the start of Ilam Stream, a short channel that soon meets the Avon at Ilam Homestead.

Keep going through the grounds to Waimairi Road, then turn left on the far side of that street to find the vehicle entrance to the university sports grounds.

Walk up the drive and turn left along the side of those fields to find Okeover Stream on their northern boundary. From there it is a pleasant, grassed walk along the stream bank, with views across the fields to the homestead gardens, university buildings and Port Hills.

The stream is covered again as it reaches the Halls of Residence, so just stay on the grass past the tennis courts and come out to Ilam Road. By this time, the channel has reappeared, but is at the other side of a fence on private property.

Cross Ilam Road next to the first house past the university campus and walk along the footpath to a car park. On your left, before the workshops, the stream's course can be seen in the trees. There is a similar opportunity to walk near it on the far side of the workshops, left from Engineering Road.

Across the campus road the stream suddenly springs to life where it has been engineered to form part of the university's landscaping.

It passes between the civil engineering and science blocks and becomes scenic, with lawns sweeping down to it, rock formations and side channels entering as waterfalls.

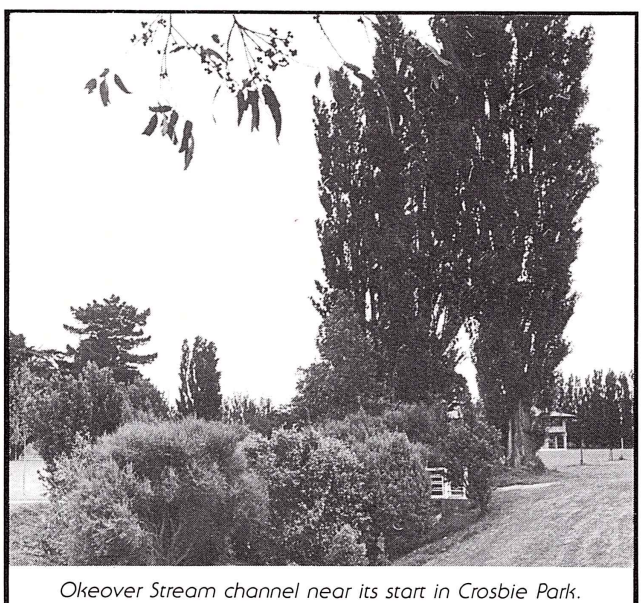
The Okeover spreads out into a pond here as it flows beside and round a lecture theatre. Then it returns to being a normal stream alongside the electrical engineering block.

Across Forestry Road is a nice stretch near the School of Forestry and Forestry Research buildings as

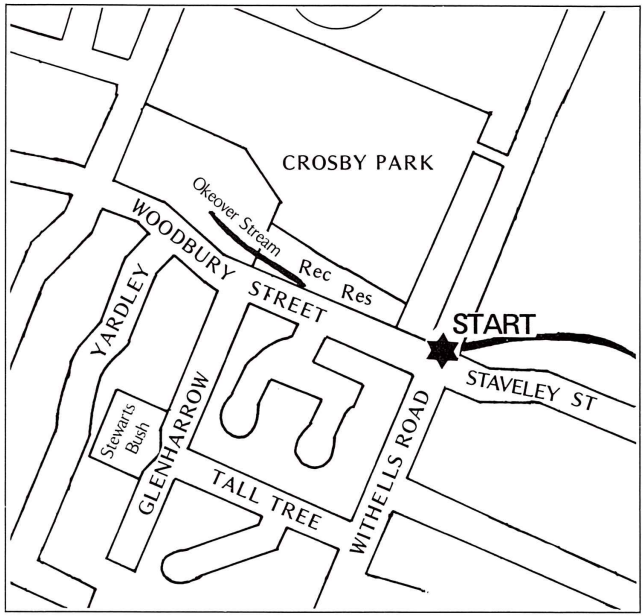
the stream goes into a couple of curves. A new footbridge leads to the new research building across the stream.

Either walk out to Creyke Road through that building's grounds or go back into the campus to Arts Road and back out to Clyde Road.

Reaching Clyde Road by either route will bring you to the last public view of the stream, which reaches the Avon inside a block of residential properties.



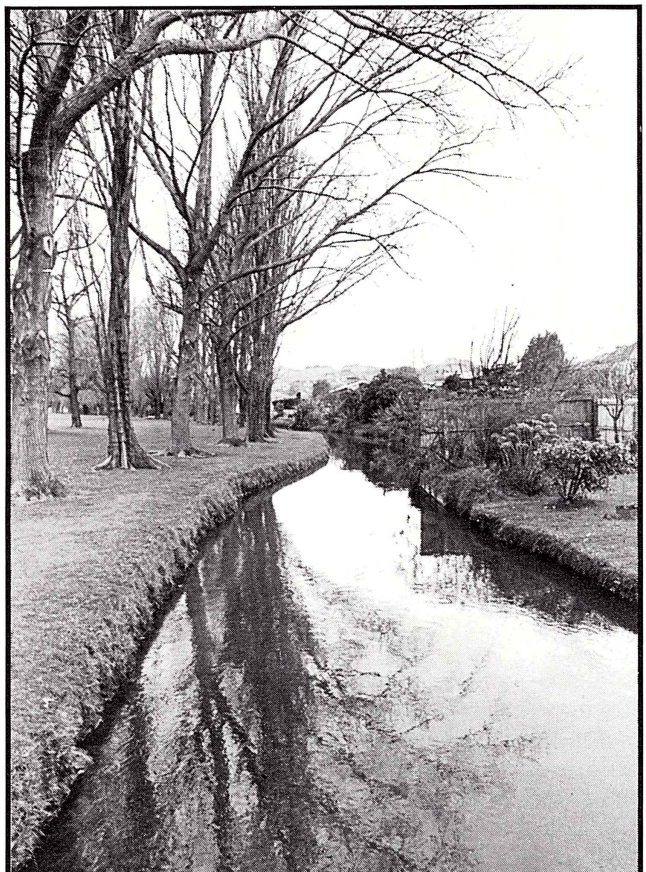
Okeover Stream channel near its start in Crosbie Park.



HOW TO GET THERE

Take a Woodbury Street bus to the corner of Staveley Street and Withells Road, then walk south to Tall Tree Avenue. The university section of the stream can be reached by leaving a Woodbury Street bus at the Waimairi Road/ Maidstone Road roundabout.

To return to Cathedral Square, walk down Clyde Road to the Kotare Street roundabout and take a bus heading toward the city.



The Heathcote River flows past Spreydon Domain in winter.

Heathcote— A much maligned waterway

Of all the city's streams, the Heathcote River is the most maligned, for reasons beyond its control.

The river is quickest to run dirty because of all the silt that washes down from the Port Hills during rainstorms; and its lower reaches are the quickest to flood when a high tide meets stormwater run-off.

The Heathcote also starts in farm country, which naturally adds material that clouds the water.

Despite all that, the Heathcote can be the most varied walking route in Christchurch. The river is hardly ever out of public sight as it curls through Hoon Hay, Somerfield, Beckenham, St. Martins, Opawa, Woolston, and Ferrymead.

Headwaters of the Heathcote are in several places near Wigram Aerodrome, and are relatively inaccessible. The channels soon come to roads near the city.

Probably the best place to start, even though it is too distant for walking, is along Wigram Road near the airfield. The Heathcote's western-most channel crosses here as it comes from fields between the airfield and Awatea Road.

The channel, which does not always contain water, can be seen under a dip in Wigram Road. The river is marked by adjacent trees and farm buildings, and its channel seems to run straight toward the Port Hills.

Drive along Wigram Road, heading south-west from the city boundary, and turn left into Dunbars Road. At the end of Dunbars Road is the northern boundary of Oaklands and Halswell Road.

Turn left and drive towards the city to the first road on your left. Nash Road leads across country to St. John of God Hospital, whose grounds mark the next part of the Heathcote's channel.

A bridge on the hospital's entrance drive crosses the river as it comes through a grove of large trees. Down to the right, you can see the river going under an old footbridge and disappearing into a shallow valley, with the hospital's superb gardens on both sides.

Even though the Heathcote is often dry here, too, its channel is still interesting, and the setting is not to be missed. The gardens are among the best in Canterbury. When dry, the brown channel takes on the appearance of the upended belly of a porcupine.

Find a place to park and take one of several paths down into the river's trough.

When you leave the hospital grounds and return to Halswell Road, you can see the river once more in its rural setting by turning left into Templetons Road on the city's edge. A small bridge crosses the Heathcote at the end of that street.

Hillmorton houses keep the river out of public view as it loops round the north side of houses in Warren Crescent. Return to Halswell Road and turn left into Curletts Road, an arterial route to the Southern Motorway. The roadsides have been

mounded and grassed along here, which makes it easy and interesting to walk along them.

On the far side of the river bridge, at the left, is land that will be transformed into a large recreation park. The City Council is buying the 25ha property. A feature of the new park will probably be a walkway that opens up part of the countryside riverbank.

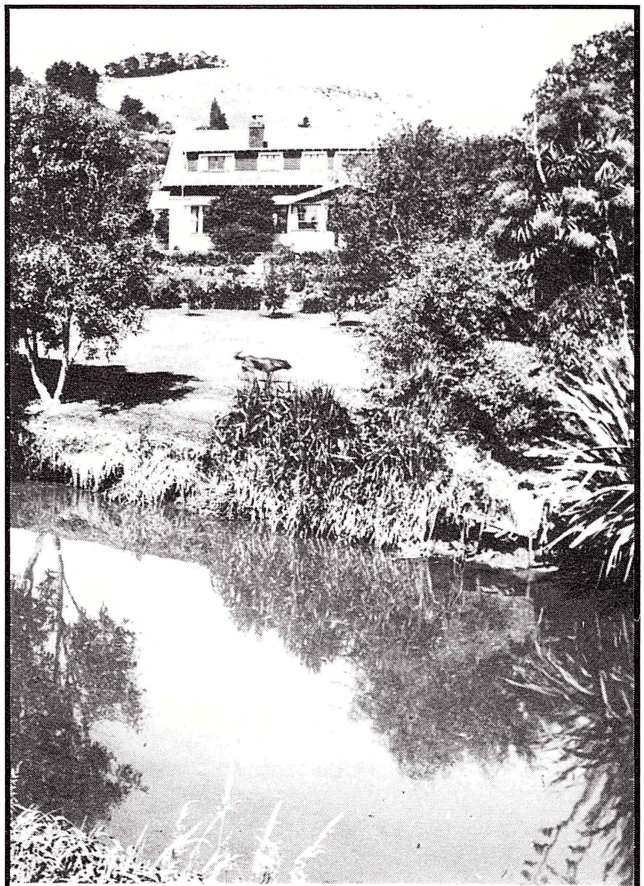
On the right side of the Curletts Road bridge are two more inviting areas where riverside walks can be done, but permission should be sought before wandering there.

On the right-side bank are the grounds of Spreydon School, including a playgound near Lincoln Road. Check with the school office before walking there.

On the other side of the river, with access from Annex Road, is a large swath of lawn and mature trees that belongs to Sunnyside Hospital. Check with the hospital's administration office before entering the property, where there has been some new planting and a walking track is being formed.

After it flows under Lincoln Road, the Heathcote River goes out of sight for a while. Walk along the left footpath of Hoon Hay Road, towards the hills, until you see the tops of trees behind houses on your left.

Before you reach Mathers Road, a public way dips down to your left and crosses the river into Spreydon Domain. From the footbridge is a



The Heathcote and Port Hills at Hansen Park.

beautiful view downstream through riverside trees to the Port Hills.

The river is often calm and clear here, with a level grassed bank that is good for walking. Go downstream to the end of the park, then turn left and walk up to Domain Terrace.

Turn right into Domain Terrace, then right again at Glynne Crescent. Along that street, to the right, is a public way that leads to a footbridge across the river from Smartlea Street.

At the end of Glynne Crescent is Lyttelton Street. Turn right here and walk along past West Spreydon School to Sparks Road. Cross that intersection and continue on down to Centennial Park's Pioneer Sports Stadium.

Go to your right on the near side of the stadium, crossing its car park, and down the fence line of the city council's works yard to the river again.

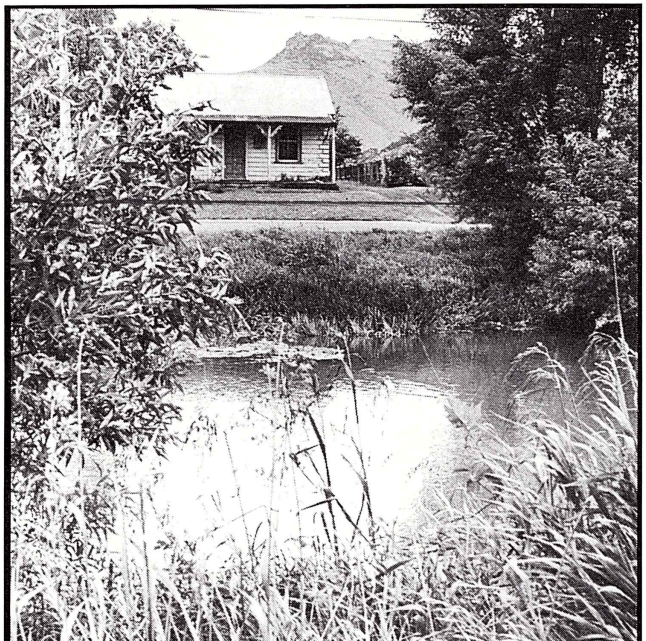
Down the Centennial Park bank of the river is a walking track formed some years ago that leads to Rose Street. On the far side of that street, look downstream from the bridge to see the Heathcote as it flows through a stretch of private gardens on both sides.

Just east of the river in Rose Street, turn right into Palmside Street, a pleasant residential street that curves left into Woodbank Street. Shortly, turn right into Ferniehurst Street and walk past Ashgrove Reserve to the river again.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take a Halswell No. 7 bus to reach the Nash Road entrance to St. John of God Hospital. If you want to start a walk where the Heathcote River flows under Lincoln Road, take any No. 7 bus to the intersection of Lincoln and Hoon Hay Roads.

To return to Cathedral Square, take a bus heading toward the city in Cashmere Road.



The Heathcote near Radley Park.

Thickets and ponds along middle Heathcote

A walk along the Heathcote River as it curls through the southern suburbs of Christchurch can start near the confluence of Cashmere Stream, coming in from the west, and the river.

At the intersection of Cashmere and Hoon Hay Roads, a new subdivision is being built among large trees on land that borders the stream across from the historic Cracroft House.

Walk down Worsleys Road to an old stone bridge across a side stream from Worsleys Spur. Just beyond that bridge, on the lower slope of a hillside, is the Old Stone House, now a community centre.

After visiting the house, return to Worsleys Road and walk to the city side of the bridge across Cashmere Stream. Enter the woodland on that end of the bridge to find a trail that follows the stream bank.

This is one of the fine stream walks of Christchurch, largely unknown outside the neighbourhood. There was not enough money some years ago to buy the entire woodland for a park, but many of the trees were protected and a streamside reserve was created for the public.

The trail is easy to follow, and the stream has as much width and water as local rivers as it nears the Heathcote.

When you come to the Cashmere Road bridge, there is a bit of a scramble up to the roadway. From there, you can look back to the stream.

Cross the bridge to see the Heathcote River coming in from the north and making a wide curve toward The Princess Margaret Hospital.

There are also good trees along this part of the river. Stay on the river side of Cashmere Road until you come to Ferniehurst Street, then cross the river to Ashgrove Park, a corner and small hillside of native bush and isolated places to get away from the streets.

When you come out of the bush, take Ferniehurst Street across the river again, turning into the long reserve that follows the Heathcote down Cashmere Road.

This part of the river needs nothing to recommend it apart from the largely-unbroken opportunity for walking and looking up at houses on Cashmere.

There is some seating along here, and the streamside reserve soon enters mature trees. There are sometimes two tracks to follow near the street, but far enough away to feel sheltered from it. A picturesque footbridge arches over the river to Ashgrove Terrace at one point.

After you cross Barrington Street, stay close to the river again, still on a path. Near the junction of Cashmere and Thorrington Roads, the path climbs steeply to the street.

Instead of climbing up, walk through the motorcycle barriers at the water's edge and start down a trail that enters another of the city's little-known "wilderness" areas.

This section of the riverside is part of a Heathcote Countil legal road—a road that will never be built. The thicket runs behind houses, but most of them cannot be seen from the woods.

Two tracks, one just at the water's edge, twist through the woodland. It takes about ten minutes at a leisurely pace to reach Ernlea Terrace, at the other side. The woods have been used for years as an informal shortcut in the neighbourhood, and the County cleared out a lot of undergrowth a few years ago.

When the sun is out, pretty shadows are cast through the green canopy. You feel so far away from civilisation as you would miles from the city.

When you come to Ernlea Terrace, you are just a short walk from Colombo Street and the Heathcote County Council offices.

Cross the river bridge at Colombo Street, then cross the street to enter Waimea Terrace, on the city side of the river. Waimea Terrace is a pretty riverside street with a footpath to keep you away from the traffic.

When you come to Malcolm Avenue, cross the bridge and take a pathway down the right side of the Heathcote. That path through dark, old trees skirts the river side of the Thorrington School grounds. This area has also been opened up in recent years and is well used by local residents.

The path comes out of the trees in Sloan Terrace. Follow the street to Centaurus Road and stay on

The Heathcote River from Waimea Terrace.

the riverbank until you come to the bridge opposite Bowenvale Avenue.

Cross the bridge and turn to your right down Eastern Terrace. This pretty walk past houses mainly on a rise above the river also offers views of the hills. Just past Sandwich Road is the beautifully landscaped lower part of Beckenham Park, with its rolling lawn and ponds. There are walks through the park that slope to the river.

Continue down Eastern Terrace to Tennyson Street. Here, you can cross the Heathcote on a vehicle bridge and turn left in Riverslaw Terrace. The walk along the riverbank here, partly past new housing, brings you out to Wilsons Road, opposite Waltham Park.

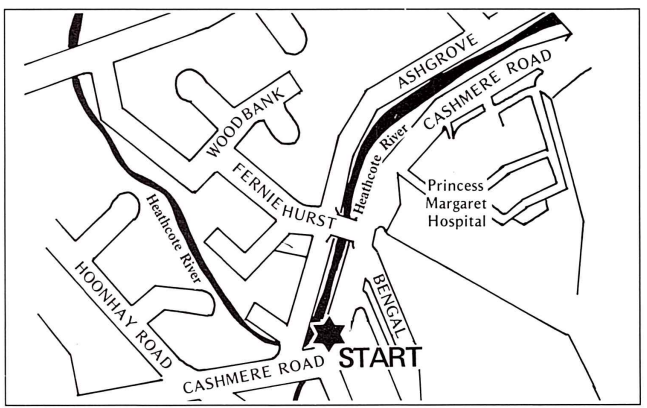
Stay on this side of the river as you cross Wilsons Road. You again leave the main roads as Riverslaw Terrace heads towards a cul de sac, and you can stay on the grass riverbank until you find a sealed path leading away from the street.

You look across the river to land on a low hillside that still retains a rural character, with horses in the paddocks. The new Opawa Group Home now sits on a corner of that land.

The pathway leads past houses to a green triangle of land beside Ensors Road. Cross the street and walk down the right side of the river as Riverslaw Terrace continues.

There is another fine stretch of river. When you come to a footbridge opposite Ford Road, cross to Fifield Terrace and backtrack to Cholmondeley Avenue. Up the right hand side of this Opawa Street are the beautiful grounds of Risingholme Park, with its magnificent old house now used as a community centre.

The stream beside the park, with a path above it, is Jacksons Creek.

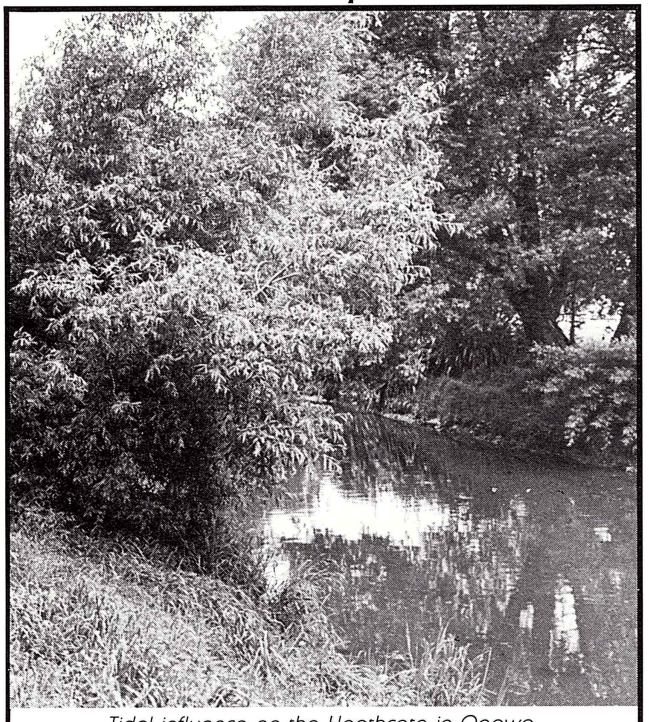


HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take any No. 20 bus to reach the intersection of Hoon Hay and Cashmere Roads. To join the Heathcote River down Colombo Street, at Waimea Terrace, take a No. 2 bus. A No. 12 bus will take you to the river at the intersection of Waltham Road and Riverslaw Terrace.

To return to Cathedral Square, walk down Cholmondeley Avenue from Risingholme to Opawa Road and take a bus heading toward the city.

The Final Lap:



Tidal influence on the Heathcote in Opawa.

From Hansen Park to the Estuary

The Heathcote River sometimes takes on the appearance of a slow-moving canal as it becomes more tidal through St. Martins.

Part of the river's charm is its channel filled almost to the brim, although riverside dwellers can be forgiven for wishing the river had less charm when tides and storms cause flooding.

You can start a walk along the lower Heathcote from the corner of Beckford Road and Fifield Terrace. Walk along the left side of the river until you reach Hansen Park. The Opawa Park is a former rubbish tip, and for many years access to the riverbank was closed on this side while the land was used for grazing.

Now the park is being developed for recreation. A sealed path follows the river as it loops back toward Opawa Road. The path gives you a chance to see the river and hills from vantage points that are far removed from traffic.

You will soon come to the footbridge that comes across from Armstrong Avenue and the end of Riverslaw Terrace. Further on, the path takes you past a charming row of linked gardens with lawns sweeping down to the river.

The walk round Hansen Park is worthwhile on its own, even if you do not have time to go the rest of the way downstream.

The loop track brings you opposite the landscaped and treed bank along Aynsley Terrace.

On your left, just past the park boundary, houses are being built in a new subdivision uphill from the riverbank reserve that continues on and comes to a footbridge across Jacksons Creek, which enters the river here after its long journey from Sydenham.

Jacksons Creek, starting near the Nazareth House grounds, has come through Bradford Park and has almost touched the Heathcote near Waltham Park before veering north and coming back down through the grounds of Risingholme Park.

Across the creek outlet, the path skirts the right side of Louisson Place and comes out beside the footbridge just upstream from Opawa Road.

Turn left in Opawa Road and cross to Vincent Place. That takes you away from the river for a few minutes. Where Vincent Place turns left along the railway track, go straight ahead on the sealed pedestrian crossing of the tracks from Lyttelton. The Opawa station used to sit on the other side of the tracks.

Once across the railway line, take the pathway down to the right to reach the river again. Turn left in Richardson Terrace to follow the Heathcote on its way to Ferry Road.

You will find another footbridge across the widened river, and the walking along Clarendon Terrace on the other side is just as good.

If Christchurch Drainage Board stopbanking goes ahead, this part of the river will have a different look in a few years as low mounds are built and landscaped to protect houses against minor flooding.

As you near Ferry Road, the view upstream shows the Heathcote at its best, especially when it is placid. If you stay on the Richardson Terrace side, a wander into the river entrance to Woolston Park is worthwhile.

At Ferry Road cross the Radley Bridge and walk down Radley Street until you reach Cumnor Terrace. The river goes out of public view for a while, and the best way to reach it again is by turning left from Cumnor Terrace into Riley Crescent.

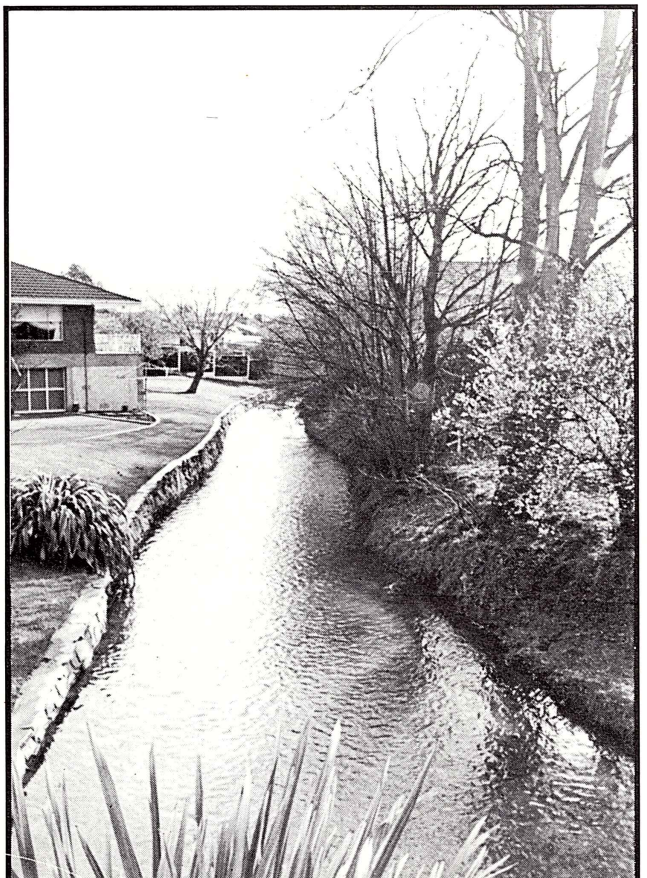
A public footpath leads from the end of that street into Radley Park, which follows the river's broad curve to the south and west.

Beyond Radley Park, the river flows through industrial areas. From the park, a large footbridge leads across to the Woolston business district.

Cross the bridge and turn right to reach the Woolston Cut project. When the channel is finished, two footbridges will cross it from neighbourhoods south of the cut.

There is no easy way to follow the river past the end of King Edward Terrace, and it is probably better to return to Ferry Road along Rutherford, Bamford or Long Streets. Then turn right to the Tunnel Road roundabout, where reserves can be used to get next to the river again.

On the opposite bank, which has been an eyesore for years because of the build-up of

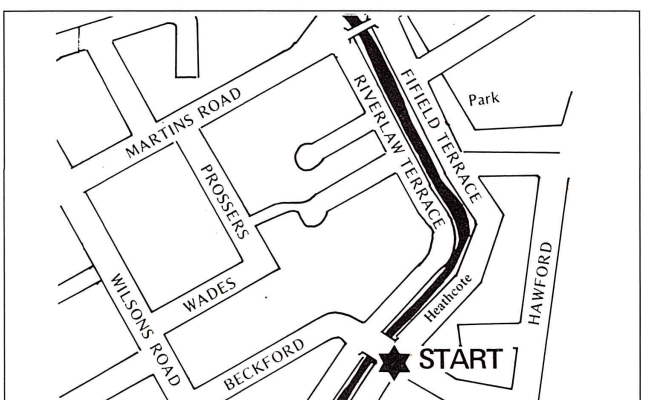


The Heathcote near Princess Margaret's Hospital.

dredged material, a riverbank beautification project is underway.

Although it is a long walk down Ferry Road to the Ferrymead Bridge, where the Heathcote joins the Estuary, the views at the other end are worth the trouble.

So is a side trip down Bridle Path Road to Ferrymead Historic Park, which flanks the river on its south side.



HOW TO GET THERE

From Cathedral Square, take a No. 12 bus to reach the intersection of Wilsons Road and Beckford Road.

To return to Cathedral Square, walk to nearby Ferry Road and take a bus heading toward the city.

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BACK COVER: *An old tree stump waves its roots on the edge of the Estuary, near the Avon River's outlet.* (Jane Healey)